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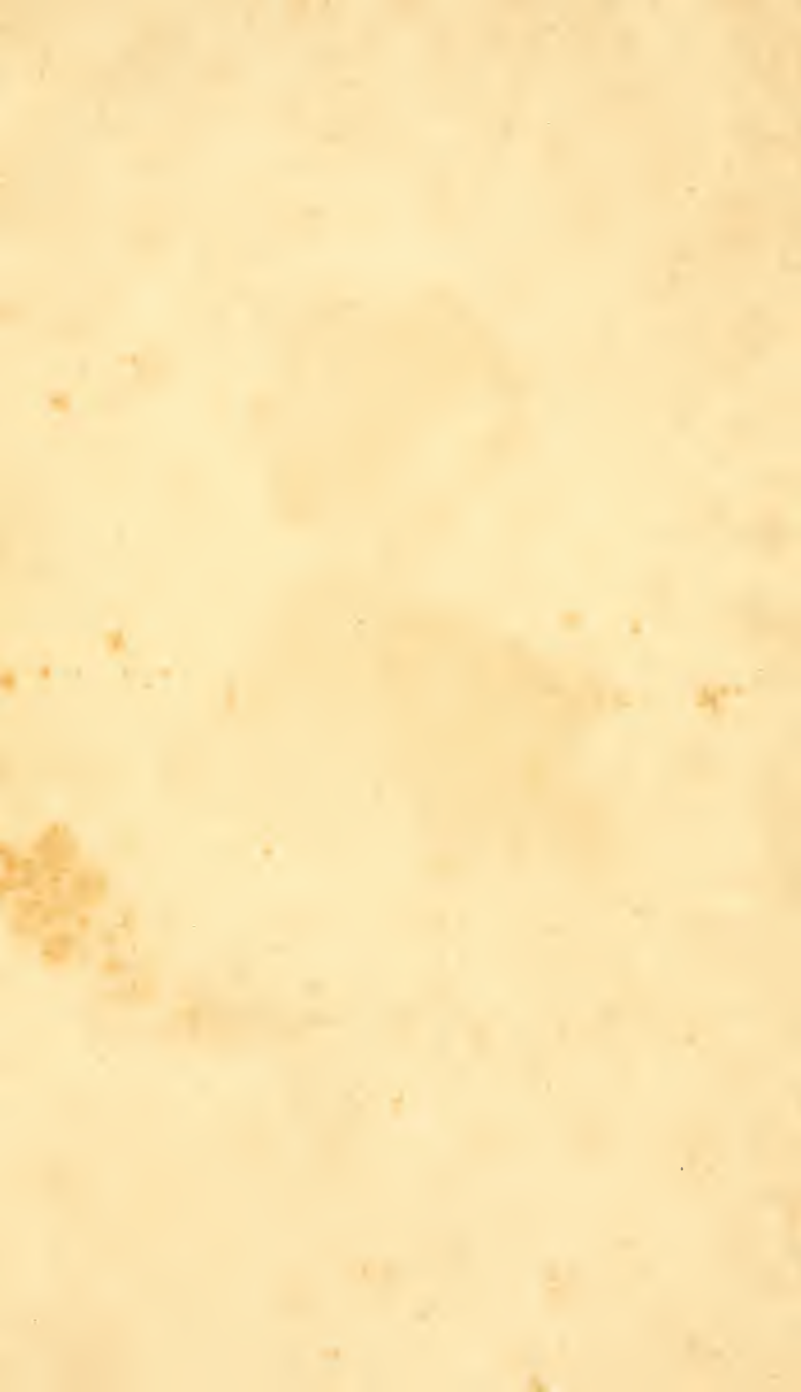
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 Scott, John, 1777-1834.  
 The life of the Rev. Thomas  
 Scott, Rector of Aston













*Drawn by L. Crosse*

*Engraved by W. Beut*

*your very affectionate friend*  
*Thomas Scott*



THE LIFE  
OF THE  
REV. THOMAS SCOTT,

RECTOR OF ASTON SANDFORD, BUCKS;

INCLUDING A NARRATIVE DRAWN UP BY HIMSELF, AND  
COPIOUS EXTRACTS OF HIS LETTERS :

BY JOHN SCOTT, A.M.

VICAR OF NORTH FERRIBY, AND MINISTER OF ST. MARY'S, HULL, ETC.

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“ They glorified God in me.” GAL. i. 24.

“ I laboured more abundantly—yet not I, but the grace of God  
which was with me.” 1 Cor. xv. 10.

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THE THIRD EDITION.

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1822.

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## P R E F A C E.

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IT is not my intention to add to a volume, already perhaps too bulky, by here enlarging on any of those topics which the subject of biography in general, or the contents of the present work in particular, might suggest. All that I propose is, briefly to advert to a few points which may seem to require notice.

The narrative, which I now present to the world, will no doubt produce upon different classes of readers very different impressions. Possibly it may carry a degree of offence to the feelings of some, to contemplate the very humble scenes in which one, who has since been regarded with much veneration, was conversant throughout the former years of his life. This however is a case in which, could the sentence be divested of the pride, I fear, inherent in it, we might be tempted to apply the words,

*Quantum generi demas, virtutibus addis.*<sup>1</sup>

But it is more becoming to say, as my father was accustomed to do—without at all wishing to disparage external distinctions where they existed—that in all

<sup>1</sup> To depress my rank is to exalt my character.

these respects he was *a man of no pretensions*. Nor can any Christian, appreciating his other qualifications, *consistently* regard him the less on that account.

Others may view, not without jealousy, a person who, by his own shewing, was once "far off" from God and from goodness, represented as eminently "brought nigh;" distinguished by the divine blessing, and by great usefulness in the church of Christ. The real and well informed Christian, however, will regard the mighty change with far other feelings: and to all descriptions of persons his family and friends would say, If we "glory" in our revered relative, it is not in what he was by nature, but in what he became by divine grace: or, to express the sentiment in terms which would have been still more agreeable to his own principles and feelings, We "glorify GOD in him."

Some may perhaps object to the full *disclosure* that is made of those circumstances of his history and character, which always humbled him in his own sight, and which may tend to abase him in the view of worldly or pharisaical persons. There remained however not much of this nature to be added to the confessions of "The Force of Truth:" his supplemental narrative, included in this volume, was all written in the same unreserved style: and it appeared to me that it would be unworthy of his biographer, as it would certainly have been contrary to his own

wishes, to attempt any suppression of what neither could nor needed to be concealed.

It is more than possible that the publication of so detailed a story, concerning a clergyman of humble station, may appear to many a proceeding altogether calling for—perhaps scarcely admitting of—apology. Some notice of this objection will be found in an early part of the work itself. I shall only here add, that I could not but remember that I was called to give to the public an account of a person, on whose works—of plain didactic theology—and those charged at the lowest price at which they could be afforded—that public had not thought it too much to expend upwards of TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS, during the author's own lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

On the part of many who bore a high regard for my father's character, some impatience has been expressed for the appearance of the present work. I trust however it will now be seen that time has not been lost in bringing it forward. Indeed I cannot but fear that I may incur the charge, rather of premature publication than of unnecessary delay.

The work itself will sufficiently explain the nature of the materials from which it has been composed. I would only therefore observe, that, of all the letters which are introduced into it, there is not one of which

<sup>1</sup> See the calculation concerning his Commentary alone, below, p. 295.

any copy had been preserved by the writer. Their preservation has depended on the persons to whom they were addressed, and it appears to have been in great part accidental.

The letters will, I trust, be judged a highly valuable part of the volume: and, as will appear to the reader, there are many more in reserve, from which a further selection may be given to the public, if it should be desired. With this view I would still earnestly invite those friends who possess letters of my father's to communicate to me, through the medium of my bookseller,<sup>1</sup> either the originals, or authenticated copies of such parts as may not be mixed up with private affairs. To those who have already complied with this request, I beg leave here to return my sincere acknowledgments.

I find that it may not be superfluous to insert a caution with respect to any new publication bearing my father's name. Whatever is not expressly sanctioned by his family, must be considered as appearing contrary to their wishes.

*May 6th, 1822.*

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Seeley, 169, Fleet Street, London.

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THE LIFE  
OF THE  
REV. THOMAS SCOTT.

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CHAPTER I.

INCLUDING THE FIRST SIXTEEN YEARS  
OF HIS LIFE.

THE public are already apprized, that my honoured father left behind him a written memoir of his own life, brought down to the year 1812. The first sentence of this manuscript will explain, at once, his reason for so doing, and the nature of the composition. "As there can be little doubt," he says, "that, after my decease, something in the way of memoir, or narrative, will be published concerning me, to prevent misinformation, and to supply a few authentic materials, I purpose, in the following sheets, to state such facts as seem of sufficient importance, leaving it, in general, to others to make their observations upon them."

Hence it would seem, that not so much to write for the public eye, as to furnish "authentic materials"

to those who might be induced to do so, was the object which he proposed to himself. Accordingly I confess, that, on my first inspection of the narrative, it appeared to me, though in all parts gratifying to the writer's immediate friends, yet in many instances more minute and familiar than might be suitable for a work, to be submitted to the world at large. But, on more deliberately considering the subject, and reflecting on what the public have, in other instances, not only tolerated, but approved, I have so far altered my judgment, as to determine to keep back very little indeed of what my father has written; and, in committing it to the press, to subject it only to that verbal or otherwise slight correction, which an unrevised composition naturally requires.

It further appears, from the sentence which has been recited, that, contenting himself with recording leading facts, the writer left it to others to make the proper reflections upon them.

On the whole, therefore, in compliance with what would, I hope, have obtained his own sanction, and what, I feel some confidence, will meet the wishes of the religious public, I shall give the bulk of my father's manuscript in his own words; interweave with it pretty copious selections from his correspondence, illustrative of its contents; offer such reflections as the several occasions may seem to demand; and, after we shall have lost the help of that original document, detail the history of the remaining period of his life, as much upon the same plan as the means in my power shall enable me to do. I would endeavour every where to keep in view the great object for



which he lived, and to which, on his dying bed, more entirely, if possible, than before, he approved of having devoted his life; and would humbly desire, that the present work may still conduce to the same design: that here, as well as in the writings more exclusively his own, he may “yet speak” to the glory of God, and to the highest good of mankind.

My father thus records the time and place of his birth. “I was born on the fourth of February, 1746-7, answering, since the change of the style, and the beginning of another century, to February 16, 1747. A small farm-house at Braytoft, in Lincolnshire, was the place of my birth. Braytoft is five miles from Spilsby, and about six from Skegness,—where a well-known bathing place has since been built; but where, in my remembrance, only one solitary public house existed, on the seashore.

“My father, John Scott, was a grazier, a man of a small and feeble body, but of uncommon energy of mind, and vigour of intellect; by which he surmounted, in no common degree, the almost total want of education. His circumstances were very narrow, and for many years he struggled with urgent difficulties. But he rose above them; and, though never affluent, his credit was supported, and he lived in more comfortable circumstances to the age of seventy-six years. I was the tenth of thirteen children, ten of whom lived to maturity: and my eldest brother was twenty-three years older than my youngest sister.

“Concerning my father’s family and ancestors, I know scarcely any thing. My mother’s maiden name

was Wayet, and she was descended of a family well known and respected, for a long time back, at Boston.<sup>1</sup> From her method of ruling and teaching her large family, when very young, I derived many of my best maxims concerning the education of my own children.

“Having, principally by her, been taught to read fluently, and to spell accurately, I learned the first elements of Latin at Burgh, two miles off, at a school to which, for a while, I went as a day-scholar. But at eight years of age I was sent to Bennington, a village about four miles north of Boston, where my father had a grazing farm, (on which my elder brother and sister resided, with my father’s sister,) that I might attend a school in the parish, kept by a clergyman. Here I continued about two years; and, in addition to writing, and the first rudiments of arithmetic, I learned a little Latin at my master’s desire, who thought he saw in me a turn for that kind of learning. He had, as I recollect, no other Latin scholar.—Exclusive of some instances of my early proficiency in several kinds of vice, and the severe corrections to which this exposed me, I remember little of these two years, except a preservation from drowning, in a situation into which I had rushed in defiance of warning. My escape was considered as wonderful, for none of the spectators was able to give me any aid.

“Towards the close of these years my eldest brother died on board a man of war, I think at Portsmouth. My father, amidst his difficulties, greatly

<sup>1</sup> The signature of one of the family is annexed to the warrant for the execution of King Charles I.

desired to have a son educated for one of the learned professions; and his eldest son, showing a talent for learning, was sent to school, at Scorton, in Yorkshire, (of which place more will be spoken hereafter,) and, when he had acquired a competent stock of Latin and Greek, was bound apprentice to a surgeon and apothecary at Burgh. His master dying during the term of his apprenticeship, left him his indentures, and, I believe, a small legacy. He then went to Lynn, in Norfolk, where he enjoyed far greater advantages for acquiring professional knowledge; and, having attended the hospitals in London for some time, he was induced, on the breaking out of war with France, to enter the navy as surgeon's mate, determined to push his fortune in that line. His advance from the lowest rank to that next to a surgeon, to which, if he had lived, he would certainly have been very soon promoted, was rapid; and the most sanguine expectations were formed. But a vessel of war arriving from abroad, with a malignant disease among the crew, he, being, as it always appeared, a stranger to fear, and enthusiastically eager in the pursuit of professional knowledge, requested to be one of those who were sent on board of her. There he soon caught the disease, which terminated at once his prospects and his life, when he was about twenty-four years of age.

“ My father felt this event as, in every way, a most heavy affliction. He determined, however, if possible, to have a son in the medical profession; and, as I was thought of the proper age, and seemed capable of readily learning Latin, I was selected. From this time my attention was almost entirely directed to that language; and, at different places, I got a superficial

knowledge of several books generally read at schools : which gave the appearance of far greater proficiency than I had actually made.

“ At ten years of age I was sent to Scorton, where my brother had been before me; and there I remained five years, without returning home, or seeing any relation or acquaintance.—Scorton is a hamlet of the parish of Bolton, where the celebrated Henry Jenkins, who lived one hundred and sixty-nine years, lies buried; and there is a monumental inscription for him in the parish church. This was one hundred and forty miles from Braytoft; five miles from Richmond, and two from Catterick, in Yorkshire; the river Swale running between. There were then several turnpike-roads in the neighbourhood, and one through the village, but I do not remember that I ever saw or heard of a stage coach!—The whole expense of boarding and clothing amounted to 14*l.* a year; two guineas were paid for teaching, books being found; there were some extra-charges for writing, arithmetic, and French; and some expenses for medical assistance: but I have often heard my father mention, that I cost him 17*l.* a year, for five years. I think he must have underrated the sum, but I am fully satisfied that 100*l.* more than covered all the charges of the five years; and this was all the cost of my education. Yet I wanted for nothing. I had plenty of wholesome food, and, though my clothing was rather coarse, I was as tenderly taken care of when sick, (which was frequently the case,) by the widow, who kept the boarding house, and her daughter, as I could have been at home.—The effect, however, of such long separations from parents, brothers, and sisters, and other near relations, is far from fa

avourable to the forming of the moral and social character, in future life.

“ The school at Scorton is, I believe, well endowed: and it was at that time of considerable note. During the whole of my continuance there, there were above eighty scholars; several from remote places; and a few of superior station in society, whose names I have since met with as occupying rather conspicuous situations. The Rev. John Noble was head master. He had been, in his day, indisputably an able teacher of the learned languages: but at this time he was old and lethargic; and though still assiduous, was most grossly imposed upon by the boys, and by no one more than myself.

“ When I arrived at Scorton, I was asked what Latin books I had read; and my answer induced the usher to overrate my proficiency, and to place me in a class much beyond my superficial attainments. This, however, stimulated me to close application; and it was not very long before I overtook my class-mates, and with ease accompanied them. Had I then been again pushed forward, I might have been excited to persevering diligence: but, as I could appear with tolerable credit without much application; partly by actual proficiency, and partly by imposing on Mr. Noble, under whose care I now came; my love of play, and my scarcity of money for self-indulgent expenses, induced me to divide a great proportion of my time between diversion and helping other boys in their exercises, for a very scanty remuneration, which I lost in gaming, or squandered in gratifying my appetite. Still, however, I made considerable progress, and should have been at the head of the school, had

I continued in it another year. But one thing is remarkable, considering what has since taken place, that, while I could translate Latin into English, or English into Latin, perhaps more readily and correctly than any other boy in the school, I never could compose themes. I absolutely seemed to have *no ideas*, when set to work of this kind, either then or for some years afterwards; and was even greatly at a loss to write a common letter. As for verses, I never wrote any except *nonsense* verses, of one kind or other; which has perhaps been the case also of many more prolific versifiers. God had not made me a poet, and I am very thankful that I never attempted to make myself one."

In addition to what my father has here stated, I think it sufficiently curious to be inserted in the history of one who lived to compose so many large volumes, that I have often heard him remark, that, in his early days, he looked upon few things with so much surprise, as upon great books: he felt utterly at a loss to conceive, how they had ever been produced. For the encouragement, also, of industry and perseverance, I would venture to express an opinion, which facts, I think, have suggested to me,—that to find composition a difficult task is rather a promising symptom in young persons, than the contrary. Precocity in writing is very often no other than the art of writing "without ideas:" while they, who cannot write till they have thought, are more likely, in the event, to store their compositions with valuable matter.

"During these five years," my father proceeds, "I experienced, as I suppose most young persons

do, several remarkable preservations in perilous circumstances, generally such as my violent and eager spirit pushed me into; and I also recovered from some very dangerous fevers. These things ought to be remembered by me with lively gratitude, (especially as I then scarcely ever thought of God;) but they are not so peculiar as to deserve public notice. Perhaps one exception may be admitted. Sitting by the fireside reading, I affronted, by no great offence, a schoolfellow of as violent passions as myself: when, without my being at all aware of his design, he seized a large poker, and aimed a blow at my head, which must have proved fatal, had not its force been broken by an intervening object. As it was, it inflicted a severe wound, which left a bald place on the top of my head ever after.

“ My own conduct, at this period, was as immoral as want of money, pride, and fear of temporal consequences, and a natural bashfulness, would admit it to be; except that in one thing I retained a sort of habit of my family, and never learned to swear, or to take the name of God in vain, unless sometimes when provoked to violent passion. There was *no fear of God before my eyes*; no restraint from the thought of any relations watching over and reprov- ing my conduct; no want of most vile examples and prompters; and little fear of detection by the master. In one instance, however, this latter confidence failed me, and I was put to shame in the face of the whole school for robbing an orchard; and my disgrace was proclaimed in the neighbourhood: which I mention, to show that the master, though liable to gross impo-

sition, decidedly opposed immorality whenever it was detected.

“ I cannot quit the present subject, without observing the dire evils attending large public schools, where the boys are, for a very great part of their time, from under the eye of the master, however vigilant; and at a distance from parents and relations, and all whose presence would impose restraint upon them. Thus they are, in great measure, left to devise and practise wickedness together: they embolden one another to break through the defence of natural modesty: they teach their juniors the vicious practices which they have learned from their seniors: they bestow pains to corrupt each other's principles: they often procure the vilest publications: and, by the help of indexes, and other means, they sometimes become better acquainted with the most indecent passages of the classic authors, than with their daily lessons. The most clever, daring, and wicked of the elder boys is the hero for the time being, whom all, that are near enough to him, envy, imitate, and emulate. When he leaves the school, his most successful copyist takes his place; and the same scene is re-acted again and again. Those who have money purchase the company of such as are witty and entertaining: and not unfrequently they contract unsuspected habits of intemperance and licentiousness. Something may indeed be done, in many cases, to counteract these evils: but they are, in a great degree, inseparable from the system, and are very inadequately counterbalanced by superior advantages for the acquisition of classical learning.



“ On my return from Scorton, in June, 1762, I spent some weeks in visiting relations and acquaintance: during which time it was a matter of deliberation whether I should not return to Scorton for another year. This I earnestly desired; for I had now no books for study or amusement. Some of my schoolfellows also were about to enter at the university; and they excited in me the desire of doing the same: which I fondly hoped, after another year, might be accomplished; and which I vastly preferred to an apprenticeship. What, however, was deemed the more frugal plan, and that which most accorded to my father's previous intention, was adopted; and, in September of that year, I was bound apprentice to a surgeon and apothecary at Alford, about eight miles north of Braytoft. The person, with whom I was placed, was considered as very skilful, and had extensive practice; and the situation was thought very advantageous: but he was in all respects unprincipled, and, I am of opinion, was an infidel.

“ In this place my habit of attending church, on the Lord's day, was first interrupted: for, on whatever other days I might have little to do, I was almost uniformly employed on Sundays, from morning till evening.<sup>1</sup>

“ Here, however, I might have continued, and have acquired professional knowledge; and, I doubt

<sup>1</sup> Medical men are too apt to consider their professional engagements as excusing them from attendance on public worship. How much may be done, by proper arrangement, to avoid this may be judged from the fact, that the extensive practice of the late Mr. Hey, of Leeds, seldom prevented his resorting to church twice on the Sunday.—See his *Life* by John Pearson, Esq.

not, should have met with adequate encouragement, in that respect, had I behaved well, and rendered myself useful. But my master was a widower, and was seldom at home except when business required it: so that my leisure time was spent with servants, and the most improper companions. As to the things which I was required to do, no fault was found: but, in other respects, I behaved very ill, and gave my master just cause of complaint, and, at least, a plausible reason for dismissing me. This he accordingly did; and at the end of two months, I returned home in deep disgrace. Thus my father's favourite plan was disappointed, through my misconduct; a family, respected for morality, was dishonoured; and I was left to encounter a degree of displeasure, and mortifications resulting from it, which were hard enough in themselves to be endured, and to which my unhumiliated heart was by no means properly disposed to submit.

“ Yet I must, notwithstanding, regard this short season of my apprenticeship as among the choicest mercies of my life. Not that I learned any wisdom, or self-government, or submission, by my deep and lasting disgrace and anguish: but for two reasons. The first and most important was this: my master, though himself, not only irreligious, but in many respects immoral, first excited in my mind a serious conviction of sin committed against God. Remonstrating with me on one instance of my misconduct, he observed, that I ought to recollect, it was not only displeasing to him, but wicked in the sight of God. This remark produced a new sensation in my soul, which no subsequent efforts could destroy; and

proved, I am fully satisfied, as far as any thing proceeding from man was instrumental to it, the primary means of my subsequent conversion!—With this circumstance, therefore, my narrative in the ‘Force of Truth’ commences.”

Here, in transcribing my father’s manuscript, I find it impossible not to pause, for the purpose of avowing the impression which this simple, undisguised narrative makes upon my mind, and in which, I persuade myself, I shall have the sympathy of all those who duly appreciate what the writer afterwards became. The excellent Mr. Cecil, in his usual striking manner, remarks, “The history of a man’s own life is, to himself, the most interesting history in the world, next to that of the scriptures.” He adds, “None can either understand or feel the book of his own life like himself.” This is undoubtedly true: yet the history of the human mind, in perhaps every instance where we can fairly attain it, is and must be interesting to all pious and thinking persons. — The reflections suggested by the present narrative, at the period at which we have arrived, may not be at all uncommon; yet they are both affecting and important. What sad marks of depravity may be traced even in the earliest periods of life, by those who honestly observe themselves, and judge by the holy law of God!—How far off from himself does Almighty God often find even his most chosen instruments of good, when he first begins to form them for his service!—And by what remarkable, what apparently trivial and most unexpected means does he frequently work, to reclaim them from their wanderings! Who would have expected an ungodly,

and even infidel man, to use such words in remonstrating with an undutiful apprentice? and much more who could ever have anticipated the effects that were to follow from them, when so used?—I subjoin another remark of the same dear friend of my father's just quoted: "The Christian will look back throughout eternity with interest and delight on the steps and means of his conversion. 'My father said this! My mother told me that! Such an event was sanctified to me. In such a place God visited my soul.' These recollections will never grow dull and wearisome."—Finally, does any young person, contemplating the early aberrations of a Newton, a Cecil, a Buchanan, or a Scott; and knowing what good men they afterwards proved; feel tempted to flatter himself that he shall live to repent, and thus "have peace," though he should now gratify his passions, and "walk in the imagination" of his own heart?<sup>1</sup> Let him tremble to indulge the forlorn and presumptuous hope. Let him remember, that, while the few who are reclaimed from youthful depravity to piety, happiness, and usefulness, are recorded, the great multitude who sink into ruin, from which there is no return, pass unnoticed. Their's is the ordinary, the natural course. They form the *rule*, the others the *exception*.—Manasseh, the wicked son of Hezekiah, was indeed borne with during a reign of fifty-five years, and, probably in the latter part of it, brought to repentance and to God; but his son Amon, perhaps presuming on his father's example, was cut off at the end of two years, and, for aught that appears, died in his sins.

<sup>1</sup> See Deut. xxix. 18—21.

The account given of the period referred to, in the opening of the "Force of Truth," may be properly introduced in this place. It is as follows: "Though I was not educated in what is commonly considered as ignorance of God and religion, yet, till the sixteenth year of my age, I do not remember that I ever was under any serious conviction of being a sinner, in danger of wrath, or in need of mercy; nor did I ever during this part of my life, that I recollect, offer one hearty prayer to God in secret. Being *alienated from God through the ignorance that was in me*, I lived without him in the world; and as utterly neglected to pay him any voluntary service, as if I had been an atheist in principle. But about my sixteenth year I began to see that I was a sinner. I was indeed a leper in every part, there being 'no health in me:' but, out of many external indications of inward depravity, conscience discovered and reproached me with one especially; and I was, for the first time, disquieted with apprehensions of the wrath of an offended God. My attendance at the Lord's table was expected about the same time; and though I was very ignorant of the meaning and end of that sacred ordinance, yet this circumstance, uniting with the accusations of my conscience, brought an awe upon my spirits, and interrupted my before undisturbed course of sin.

"Being, however, an utter stranger to the depravity and helplessness of fallen nature, I had no doubt that I could amend my life whenever I pleased. Previously therefore to communicating, I set about an unwilling reformation; and, procuring a form of

prayer, I attempted to pay my secret addresses to the Majesty of heaven. Having in this manner silenced my conscience, I partook of the ordinance. I held my resolutions also, and continued my devotions, such as they were, for a short time: but they were a weariness and a task to me; and temptations soon returning, I relapsed; so that my prayer-book was thrown aside, and no more thought of, till my conscience was alarmed by the next warning given for the celebration of the Lord's supper. Then the same ground was gone over again, and with the same issue. *My goodness was like the morning dew, that passeth away:* and, loving sin, and disrelishing religious duties as much as ever, I returned, as the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire.

“ With little variation, this was my course of life for nine years: but in that time I had such experience of my own weakness, and of the superior force of temptation, that I secretly concluded reformation in my case to be impracticable. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard its spots?* I was experimentally convinced that I was equally unable, with the feeble barrier of resolutions and endeavours, to stem the torrent of my impetuous inclinations, when swelled by welcome, suitable, and powerful temptations. And, being ignorant that God had reserved this to himself as his own work; and had engaged to do it for the poor sinner, who, feeling his own insufficiency, is heartily desirous to have it done by him; I stifled my convictions as well as I could, and put off my repentance to a more convenient season ”

We now return to the narrative.

“ The other benefit derived from my short space of apprenticeship was this : I was dismissed for gross misconduct, before the whole premium agreed on had been paid : my father resolutely refused to pay the remainder ; and my master as decidedly refused to give up my indentures till it was paid : and no compromise was attempted. The claim of my master was, I apprehend, legal : but his retaining my indentures, after I was finally dismissed, was an illegal method of enforcing it, for which, in the opinion of rather high authority, ample damages might have been recovered at the close of the term. The consequence was, that, being nominally this person’s apprentice, I could not be placed out with another : and thus I was finally excluded from that profession for which I had been designed, and in which probably I should have succeeded as to this world ; but, in that case, the whole history of my life would have been changed.”

My father here subjoins in a note : “ My master lived till after I had published the ‘ Force of Truth ;’ and, so far from desiring damages from him, I wished and purposed to express my gratitude to him, as the instrument of God to me for good, by sending him a book or two, accompanied by a letter : but I procrastinated till it was too late, which I have ever since regretted. Second thoughts, in such cases, are seldom best.”

It may be added, that he feelingly regretted this omission, even on his dying bed ; a circumstance which enforces the admonition, “ Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might”—promptly, as well as decidedly.

But while my father properly acknowledges, with gratitude; the good of which providence made these events the occasion to him, it may still fairly be remarked, that the measure he met with from man appears to have been hard. To be thus summarily dismissed from his apprenticeship at the end of two months, on the first discovery, as it appears, of an offence, even though a high one; and that by a man who set him the example of immorality in his own conduct, and deprived him of the opportunity of receiving religious instruction and good impressions, on the sabbath; was certainly severe treatment. His future apparent interests in life were also sacrificed, or unwarrantably disregarded, amid the contentions of two high-spirited men. And the degradation and hardships, to which, as it will be seen, he was subjected through many succeeding years, appear to have been dictated rather by the mortified pride of his family, than by any just principle. Certainly, though providence turned it all for good, and rendered it subservient to the accomplishment of great events, yet the conduct of his father cannot be recommended as a model for imitation under similar circumstances.— I would further, however, remark, that, under the whole even of this severe discipline, he was to be congratulated, or even envied, in comparison with such young persons as, in cases of similar misconduct, either escape detection, or are, by the false tenderness of friends, screened from all punishment.

What follows, considered as describing that which probably laid the foundation of diseases under which he suffered to his dying day, illustrates the remark, often made, that a righteous God frequently punishes



sin with severity, even in instances in which its eternal consequences are mercifully prevented.

“Immediately on my return home, I was set to do, as well as I could, the most laborious and dirty parts of the work belonging to a grazier. On this I entered at the beginning of winter: and, as much of my father’s farm consisted of low land, which was often flooded, I was introduced to scenes of hardship, and exposed to many dangers from wet and cold, for which my previous habits had not prepared me. In consequence I was frequently ill, and at length suffered such repeated and obstinate maladies, (especially the ague, and effects following from it,) that my life was more than once despaired of. Yet a kind of indignant, proud self-revenge, kept me from complaining of hardship; though of reproach, and even of reproof, I was impatient to the greatest degree of irascibility.

“I had now many serious thoughts of God, and of eternity, and every illness produced a sort of paroxysm of religion; in which, having prayed for pardon in an earnest, but ignorant manner, I felt satisfied that I should be happy if I died; though, as soon as I was restored to health, all my religion vanished as the morning cloud!”

Another paragraph from the Force of Truth may further illustrate what is here briefly stated.—“Being of a reflecting turn, and much alone, aware of the uncertainty of life, I was disquieted with continual apprehensions, that the more *convenient season*” for repentance, to which I looked forward, “would never arrive; especially as, through an unconfirmed state of health, I had many warnings, and near prospects of death and eternity. For a long time I entertained

no doubt that impenitent sinners would be miserable for ever in hell: and, at some seasons, such amazing reflections upon this awful subject forced themselves into my mind, that I was overpowered by them, and my fears became intolerable. At such times my extemporary cries for mercy were so earnest and persevering, that I was scarcely able to give over; though, at others, I lived without prayer of any sort. Yet in my darkest hours, though my conscience was awakened to discover more and more sinfulness, there remained a hope that I should one day repent and turn to God. If this hope were from myself, it was a horrid presumption; but the event makes me willing to acknowledge a persuasion that it was from the Lord: for, had it not been for this hope, I should probably have given way to temptations, which frequently assaulted me, to put an end to my own life, in proud discontent with my lot in this world, and in mad despair about another."

## CHAPTER II.

### FROM HIS APPRENTICESHIP TO HIS ORDINATION.

THE narrative now proceeds: “After a few unsuccessful attempts, my father gave up all thoughts of placing me out in any other way: and for above nine years I was nearly as entire a drudge as any servant or labourer in his employ; and almost as little known beyond the circle of immediate neighbours. My occupation was generally about the cattle, and particularly in the spring season, it consisted in *following the ewes great with young*. In this service I learned habits of hardiness in encountering all sorts of weather, (for the worse the weather the more needful was it that I should be with the ewes,) which have since proved useful to me: and, though I was not kept from learning many vices, I was out of the way of acquiring habits of ease and indulgence, as I should otherwise probably have done.

“My situation, however, necessarily led me to associate with persons of the lowest station of life, and wholly destitute of religious principle—in all ranks the grand corrective, and in this rank almost the sole restraint upon character and manners. These persons tried to please me with flatteries, and to inflame still more the indignancy of spirit with which I rebelled

against the supposed degradation that I suffered. I was induced also, not unfrequently, to accompany them in their low-lived riots; which further embittered the mind of my father respecting me. Yet still I not only had seasons of remorse, but, strange to say, continued to entertain thoughts of the university, and of the clerical profession! These and various ideas and imaginations concerning study, and learning, and even the distinctions of learning, formed no small part of my waking dreams, in the tedious seasons of solitude which I was condemned frequently to pass. Hence in the winter evenings, when not seduced from home, and at other times, when I had any leisure, I read whatever books I could procure; and, I doubt not, should have made considerable proficiency, but for two impediments. First, my father, though himself remarkably fond of reading, and, for his station in life, studious, yet always considered my attachment to books, even when shown only in my leisure hours, as wholly inconsistent with diligence in my business: so that frowns and rebukes, and frequent declarations, that he foresaw I should come to be a charge to the parish, were my only encouragement in these pursuits; which greatly strengthened the temptation to spend my leisure time from home, and often, unsuspected by him, in low and abandoned company. Perhaps I was sometimes engaged with a book, when I ought to have been otherwise employed: yet, after I had left him, he gave me full credit for both diligence and skill in my services.—My other impediment was, that, having had books found for my use at school, which, of course, I did not bring away with me; I had now scarcely any

thing to study relative to the languages, and other subjects, on which my heart was set. A few torn Latin books I had, and a small imperfect dictionary; but not one Greek book except an Eton grammar.

“ The discontent which corroded my mind, during several of these years, surpasses description; and it soured my temper beyond its natural harshness: thus rendering me a great temptation, as well as trial, to my father, and those around me; to whom I generally behaved very disrespectfully, not to say, insolently. After some time, however, I became rather more reconciled to my lot; and concluded, that, though, for my misconduct at Alford, I was treated more harshly than others of the family, I should at length be provided for as a grazier: and, in consequence, waking dreams of other pursuits seemed to be less vivid in my mind.

“ I had only one surviving brother, and he was well situated in a farm: my father was far advanced in life, and not of a strong constitution: and I supposed, as I believe most of the family did, that I should succeed to his farm. But at length I discovered, (for it was not intended that I should know it,) that the lease of this farm was left by will to my brother; and that I was merely to be undertenant to him for some marsh grazing lands, which were without a house, and on which, I knew, a family could not be decently maintained. Indeed it has since been rendered indisputably certain, that, during the distresses of the American war, no person, so circumstanced, could possibly have stood his ground; and numbers, far better provided for than I

should have been, became daylabourers to the end of life."

Before we proceed to the consequences of the discovery thus made, it may perhaps not be improper to insert here a brief notice of such of my father's family as lived till he himself became known to the public, and who will be adverted to in subsequent parts of these memoirs. They were four in number; three sisters, and the brother above mentioned. Margaret, the wife of Mr. Thomas Ford, attorney at law, died in London in the year 1801; Bridget, his youngest sister, wife of Mr. Francis Burgess, a manufacturer and alderman of Leicester, died there in 1814; and Susanna, the widow of Mr. Thomas Webster, of Boston, who was four years older than my father, died at the house of her son, the vicar of Oakington, near Cambridge, in the month of April, 1820. Mrs. Webster will frequently be mentioned in the following pages under the description of the *elder*, and Mrs. Ford under that of the *younger* sister. The brother (William) was thirteen years older than my father, and died only the year before him (March, 1820) at Boston. In speaking of him I should be sorry to say any thing painful to the feelings of survivors; but there was something so remarkably different in the history of the two brothers, that it is hardly to be passed over without notice. William was a man of powerful understanding, strong health, and comely person. The favourite of his family and of the neighbourhood, he set out in life with every advantage. His education was indeed plain, yet at eighty years of

age he wrote on subjects connected with his own line of life, so as to obtain much applause, and to be styled in some periodical publications, “the Nestor of agriculture.” Yet, by the indulgence of unsubdued tempers, he involved himself in great vexations and troubles; and was, by various means, at length reduced to be dependent for subsistence, in great part, upon that very younger brother, who in early life had been almost the outcast of his family, and of whom it had been foretold that he would come to be ‘a charge to the parish;’ but who, through the happy influence of true religion upon his whole temper and conduct, was now living in credit and esteem, “blessed himself, and a blessing”<sup>1</sup> to all around him. So true is it, that “God seeth not as man seeth.”<sup>2</sup>—Yet the elder brother was by no means regardless of religion: he took a lively interest in it; and I would fain hope felt its power: but, alas! he was far from taking it up in the right manner, and applying it to all the duties of life, as his younger brother did.

My father was thus eventually the survivor of the whole family, and was for years acknowledged by them all as their common friend and benefactor.—But we return from this digression, into which the mention of his “only surviving brother,” on whom the last will of his father was to render him dependent, has led us. He proceeds:

“On this discovery, I determined to make some effort, however desperate, to extricate myself: and I only waited for an opportunity to declare my deter-

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

mination. Without delay, my Greek grammar was studied through and through; and I made what use I could of my Latin books: my father, in the mean time, expressing his astonishment at my conduct.

“At length, in April, 1772, I avowed my intention, in almost the worst manner possible. After a long wet day of incessant fatigue, I deemed myself, and perhaps with justice, to be causelessly and severely blamed, and I gave full vent to my indignant passions; and, throwing aside my shepherd’s frock, declared my purpose no more to resume it. That night I lodged at my brother’s, at a little distance: but, in the morning, I considered that a large flock of ewes, in yeaning time, had no one to look after them, who was competent to the task. I therefore returned, and did what was needful; and then set off for Boston, where a clergyman resided, with whom I had contracted some acquaintance, by conversing with him on common matters, when he came to do duty in my brother’s village, and took refreshment at his house.

“To this clergyman I opened my mind with hesitation and trepidation: and nothing could well exceed his astonishment when he heard my purpose of attempting to obtain orders. He knew me only as a shepherd, somewhat more conversible, perhaps, than others in that station, and immediately asked, ‘Do you know any thing of Latin and Greek?’ I told him, I had received education, but that for almost ten years I had never seen a Greek book, except the grammar. He instantly took down a Greek Testament, and put it into my hands; and without difficulty I read several verses, giving both the Latin



and English rendering of them, according to the custom of our school. On this, having strongly expressed his surprise, he said, ‘ Our visitation will be next week ; the archdeacon, Dr. Gordon, will be here ; and, if you will be in the town, I will mention you to him, and induce him, if I can, to send for you.’ This being settled, I returned immediately to my father for the intervening days ; knowing how much, at that season, he wanted my help, for services which he could no longer perform himself, and which he was not accustomed to entrust to servants.”

It is certainly gratifying, amid the representations which my father has given of his own temper and conduct at this time, to meet with these proofs, that, however irascible, he did not retain resentment, and quickly returned to some sense of filial duty.—It may at least gratify the reader’s curiosity to peruse an extract of a letter written just at this period. It is the earliest but one that has come into my hands, being dated “ Boston, May 17, 1772,” (less than a month after first quitting his father,) and is addressed to his sisters.

“ As I expected, I had some difficulty in reconciling my friends here to my intended scheme. My uncle Jackson, as my godfather, reminded me of my duty to my father. My answer was, that I found I could not perform the positive part, I must therefore endeavour to perform the negative part : that, though in my former conduct I had too often transgressed, yet in the present instance my conscience acquitted me. My aunt urged that, if I had not success, I could turn my hand to nothing else. I mentioned a school, for which I think myself well qualified, being

so able to instruct myself. However, after a long and serious discourse on the subject, I left them both tolerably well satisfied. My cousin Wayet has said nothing to me on the subject. Mrs. Wayet endeavoured to rally me out of it: but, I must own, I thought her arguments weak. She urged the ridicule which *poor parsons* meet with: but surely those who ridicule any one on account of his poverty, if he behaves in a manner worthy of his situation, are themselves persons whose opinion I despise.—She said, she would not be of any profession, unless at the head of it: but this can be no rule for general practice, as some must be subordinate.—She mentioned my not being brought up in a regular manner: but it is the end, not the means, that is of the greatest consequence; and, if a man be qualified, it matters not at what place he procured his qualifications.—It sometimes humbles my vanity to hear them all account of me, as of one of the lowest order of the profession, not only in point of fortune, but also in other particulars. If I know myself, I am not deficient in abilities, though I am in the art of rendering them conspicuous. My vanity prompts me to say, that I am not without hopes of making friends in this way of life, as I shall be more conversant with men of letters, who are the companions I most delight in, and for whose company I shall spare no pains to qualify myself. But, let my condition in life be what it may, I will endeavour to suit myself to it. Pray heaven preserve me independent on any other for a livelihood, and I ask no more!—The happiest hours I ever spent have been in your company, and the greatest reluctance I feel at this change of my situation is, the be-

ing separated from a set of sisters, for whom I have the most sincere regard." He resists his "heaviness" by the text, "Why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me?"

"At the appointed time," he says in his narrative, "I returned to Boston, (where my family was well known,) and readily found access to the archdeacon, who was also examining chaplain to the bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Green. Before him I repeated, in another part of the Greek Testament, what I had done at the clergyman's house; and was asked many questions, which I answered without the least disguise. The archdeacon concluded the interview, by assuring me that he would state my case to the bishop, and saying that he thought it probable his lordship would ordain me.

"Thus encouraged, I expended all the little money, which I could raise, on books; went to live at Boston; and applied diligently to study—especially to improve my knowledge of the Greek Testament, (the Gospels in particular,) and to recover, or rather to acquire, the ability of composing in Latin. In English, I had now for some years been ready in expressing my thoughts, and had even been, in some instances, a writer in newspapers and magazines. I daily, therefore, wrote in Latin, on texts of scripture, a sort of short sermons, which my friend, the clergyman, revised; and, in return, I afforded him very seasonable and welcome assistance in a grammar school, which he taught."—In a note it is here observed, "My ability of writing, and the flow of my ideas came to me chiefly by corresponding

with my sisters, on sentimental and other subjects."

—The narrative proceeds:

"The religious, or rather irreligious, state of my mind, at this period has been shown in the Force of Truth: but regard to decorum, in many respects, rendered my outward conduct more correct than formerly; and I constantly attended at the church, and the Lord's table.

"Every circumstance concurred with my eagerness of spirit to render it desirable that matters should be brought to a crisis: and those, whom alone I could consult, were of opinion, that it was as likely that I should obtain ordination on the ensuing Trinity Sunday, (June 14,) as at a future period. This was not seven weeks from the time of my first leaving my father. Having therefore procured a title to the small curacy of Martin, near Horncastle, I, with great labour, (walking above fifty miles for the purpose,) got my testimonials signed, and other things in regular order. I had learned from the archdeacon, that the ordination would be held in London; and, having sent my papers to the bishop, though I received no answer, I went thither at the appointed period. But on my arrival I was informed, that, as my papers had not come in time, and other circumstances were not satisfactory, I was not admitted a candidate. In fact, I was most groundlessly suspected of *methodism*!—On this I earnestly intreated that his lordship would allow me to speak with him: and he very condescendingly complied with my request. He asked me many questions as to the manner and events of my past

life; my family, my prospects, and my reasons for wishing to enter into orders: and I answered all with unreserved sincerity and frankness; which, apart from religion, I then thought, and still think, the best prudence. He however still negatived my urgent request to be admitted as a candidate at that ordination: but he said, that, if I would procure my father's consent, and a letter from any beneficed clergyman in the neighbourhood, whom he knew, probably he should admit me at the next ordination. This answer, however, induced a kind of despair. I was not personally known to half a dozen clergymen of the description required, and my attempt was utterly reprobated by every one of them, as in a high degree presumptuous. I was now in the twenty-sixth year of my age, wholly without the prospect of a decent subsistence: yet my father most decidedly set himself against my design; and, if his consent were necessary, there could be, as I thought, no hope.—Having therefore spent a short time in London, in viewing some of its curiosities, (for I had not been there before,) and in visiting some relations, in rather a superior station;<sup>1</sup> and, having received from them some inappropriate counsel, and, I think, undeserved rebukes, with a few small presents, I set out on my journey home. I travelled by a circuitous route, a great part of the way on foot, and the rest in various vehicles. At length I reached Braytoft, after walking twenty miles in the forenoon; and, having dined, I put off my clerical clothes, resumed

<sup>1</sup> My father's maternal aunt was married to Lancelot Brown, Esq. commonly called Capability Brown, who has been styled, I think, the father of landscape gardening.

my shepherd's dress, and sheared eleven large sheep in the afternoon!"

The reader can scarcely fail to be struck with the energy of character displayed in this simple narrative, or to be amused with the exhibition of it, which the finishing day's work afforded. Whatever the subject of this memoir did, he "did it with his might."

"This, however," he observes, "was my last labour of the kind. My attempt to obtain orders had been widely made known in the neighbourhood, even much beyond the sphere of my personal acquaintance; and it had excited much attention and astonishment, with no small degree of ridicule. This raised the spirit of my relations; and the sentiment expressed by my brother was that of the other branches of the family: 'I wish,' said he, 'my brother had not made the attempt: but I cannot bear to have it said, that one of our name undertook what he was unable to accomplish!'

"In consequence of this sensation, my brother and all my sisters met by appointment at my father's house; and, with my mother, urged it in the most earnest manner, as his indispensable duty, either to consent to my ordination, or to fix me in a farm on my own account. I apprehend it was clearly foreseen what his concession would be, if he could be induced to concede at all: and accordingly, after much debate, he gave his consent in writing to my entering into orders.

"Thus the difficulty, which I regarded as insuperable, was, in a most unexpected manner, surmounted; and, my hopes reviving, I was prepared to struggle over other obstacles, if possible. Des-

pairing of obtaining a letter to the bishop from any of the beneficed clergymen to whom, as living within a few miles, I was in some degree known, I applied without delay to the vicar of Boston, Dr. Calthorp, who was well acquainted with my mother and her family, though he had seldom, if ever, seen me, till I met the archdeacon at his house. He behaved in the most candid manner; yet, as a truly conscientious man, (which I believe he really was,) he said justly that he could not sign my testimonial, or state any thing concerning me from his own knowledge, except for the short time which had passed since I first came to his house: but that he could give a favourable account as to that time; and, if I could procure attestations from any respectable persons, though not clergymen, he would transmit them, with his own letter, to the bishop.—Thus encouraged, I went again to reside at Boston, where I applied diligently to my studies: but I was greatly frowned on by many of my relations; and I frequently heard the laugh of the boys, as I walked about the streets in a brown coat, and with lank hair, pointing me out as ‘the parson!’<sup>1</sup>—If this were a species of persecution, it certainly was not for *Christ’s sake, or for righteousness’ sake*: for the account given in the Force of Truth sufficiently shows, that I was estranged from both at this time.

“At the ensuing Michaelmas ordination I was admitted a candidate without objection, and was examined at Buckden by Dr. Gordon. After exami-

<sup>1</sup> “All clergymen, at that time, either wore wigs, or had their hair dressed.”

nation on other matters, he asked me numerous questions concerning the nature of miracles; how real miracles might be distinguished from counterfeit ones; and how they proved the truth of the doctrine in support of which they were wrought. This was, indeed, almost the only theological topic which I had studied with any tolerable attention. He, however, perceived that I began to be alarmed, and kindly said, ‘You need not be uneasy: I only wished to try of what you were capable: and I perceive that Christianity has got an able advocate in you.’—I could not find myself at liberty wholly to suppress this remarkable attestation, which, I believe, is expressed in exactly the words he used: but, had he known either my creed, and the state of my heart, at that time; or whither my subsequent inquiries would ultimately lead me; I am persuaded he would not have spoken as he did: though he was a far more reasonable and candid man, in respect of those who differed from him, even though vilified as methodists and enthusiasts, than is commonly met with.”

From two letters of my father’s, addressed to his sisters, and dated the one at Buckden, the day on which he was ordained deacon, the other at London, March 13, 1773, the day before he received priest’s orders, it may be collected, that he passed both his examinations with much credit; and that, had the latter ordination taken place in the country, he was to have had the honour of preaching before the bishop on the occasion.

As a specimen of his early correspondence, and a confirmation of what he has declared concerning his state of mind at the time, I am induced to give a part



of the former of these letters, premising, however, that it is of a different character from any other that will be inserted in this work.

“ Buckden, September 20, 1772.—Dear sisters, Success is always agreeable; though there is a success that would have been mortifying; but mine is of the most agreeable sort. Compliments, high compliments from both Dr. Gordon and my fellow candidates . . . . As I have a little time to spare, I shall endeavour to give you a sketch of my companions here. The first I shall mention is a Scotchman, a man of parts. To a sound judgment he joins a most ready wit, and an agreeable affability. He tells a story in his Scotch dialect in the most humorous manner imaginable. He is equally qualified for serious or literary conversation; and I have contracted something of an intimacy with him. His fault is, that he is too sensible of his own abilities.—The next is a most solemn ignoramus; a member of the university; who knows just as much Latin as I did when I had been two years at Scorton. He is in deacon's orders: so, in solemn consultation, we made a theme for him; and, as he is a man that bears a good character, Dr. G., I believe, knowingly overlooked it. Had we not assisted him, it would have gone nigh to have killed him.—The third is a methodistical gentleman. He forms a very good contrast to some of the company; they being too gay for their business, he so sanctified that a song, a game at cards, or a joke, is to him a most capital offence. This I could overlook: but his opinions are not mine; and I had a duel with him, on my first arrival, concerning justification by faith alone. I believe each claimed the

palm of victory: I, however, had the audience on my side.—A fourth is a good-natured harmless person, no university man, who is easily pleased, and endeavours to please those about him: so I think I ought to have placed him a little higher in my list.—The next is of the same class, but a less able person.—The remainder are Oxonian and Cantabrigian bucks, who know more of the wine and the girls of their respective universities, and of setting-dogs, racehorses, and guns in the country, than of Latin and Greek, or divinity. The archdeacon sweated two of them pretty well: but I believe they must pass muster. In the examination I did what I wish undone,—I assisted one of them in his theme, both with thoughts and Latin, whom I have since found to be very unfit for what he is going to undertake: and, without assistance, I am certain he would not have succeeded. . . . You must excuse my vanity: at the present I cannot avoid it. . . . You may depend on the sincerity of my prayers and good wishes for you all, and that I am your affectionate brother,

THOMAS SCOTT."

I have omitted in this letter an allusion to the event which he next relates in his narrative.

“ On the Saturday evening before the ordination, the secretary <sup>1</sup> read to me part of a letter from Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Dowbiggin, rector of Stoke Goldington and Gayhurst, near Newport Pagnell, Bucks, who had married the bishop's niece. He wanted a curate for Stoke, jointly with Weston Underwood, a perpetual curacy held by another person: the whole salary 50*l.* a year, with some trifling additions. This

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hodgson, who still held the same office when this memoir was written, and who lately deceased.

the secretary proposed to me: the bishop being disposed to favour my accepting it, if I had no particular attachment to the parish from which I had my title. As curacies in Lincolnshire were at that time easily obtained; and, as several clergymen, by serving three or more, had a much larger income than the stipend thus offered, I had no pecuniary inducement to accede to the proposal. But the idea of appearing as a clergyman, in a neighbourhood where I had not been known in any other character, induced me to listen to it. I went accordingly from Buckden to Stoke Goldington, and, having agreed with the rector, returned thence to my relations in Lincolnshire.—And now congratulations from every quarter took place of censure and ridicule. Of so vast importance is success or failure in fixing credit or discredit on our undertakings! Had I not previously agreed with Mr. Dowbiggin, I should probably have now been induced to settle in Lincolnshire; but consequences of great importance were connected with my removal into Bucks.”

On two of the topics mentioned in this paragraph, short extracts may be inserted from his letters.

“ April 12, 1773.—The only advantage I shall reap from coming into Bucks is, that I shall have the opportunity of seeing different places; otherwise I cannot help regarding it as a disadvantageous step. Here are so many expences, and so little to defray them, that I think any of those offers I had in Lincolnshire better; beside the pleasure of being among one’s relations, which, however your great and daring spirits may despise it, I deem a great advantage.”

The other relates to the motive which had led him to decide in favour of Buckinghamshire.

“October 23, 1772.—I thought, when I got so far from home, nobody would know in what way of life I had been, but I was mistaken. By many expressions and actions, which I have made use of, every one knows that I am well acquainted with the grazing business, and my company is much desired by the farmers, to discourse with me on our methods of proceeding in Lincolnshire: but I perceive not that it is any detriment to me. In truth I am very ill calculated to act the hypocrite. When I am asked a question which I know how to answer, I cannot pretend ignorance. Sincerity in words is so natural to me, that I do not think it any merit; for I can hardly help speaking as I think, though afterwards I accuse myself of indiscretion. Discretion, in the lesser branches of it, an ingenuous artless person can hardly practise: and I know not whether it be worth his while to attempt it.”

“The Force of Truth,” he now observes, “sufficiently explains the state of my heart and my conduct, as it must have appeared in the sight of God, in this most solemn concern of my ordination; and it suffices here to say, that, considered in all respects, I deliberately judge this whole transaction to have been the most atrocious wickedness of my life. But I did not, at the time, in any degree regard it in this light; nor did I, till long after, feel any remorse of conscience for my *prevaricating*, if not directly *lying* subscriptions and declarations, and all the evil of my motives and actions, in the whole concern. Yet a

sermon preached by a young man, who was ordained priest at the time, (but who never appeared amongst us,) on the office and duty of a minister, attracted my attention; met my approbation; and I think, on reflection, was of some use to me. His name, as I recollect, was Symmonds: I have since heard of him; but know nothing particular of his subsequent history. However, I feel assured, that good sermons, on such occasions, concerning the ministerial office and duty, especially if preached by seniors, would produce very important effects on young men, too often thoughtlessly assuming a sacred character, without having ever been seriously admonished of their duty and responsibility."

Some passages from the Force of Truth may here, again, be advantageously placed before the reader.—“At this period,” the author says—referring to the time when he lived at home with his father subsequently to his apprenticeship—“though I was the slave of sin, yet, my conscience not being pacified, and my principles not greatly corrupted, there seemed some hope concerning me: but at length Satan took a very effectual method of silencing my convictions, that I might sleep securely in my sins: and justly was I given over to a strong delusion to believe a lie, when I held the truth that I did know in unrighteousness. I met with a *Socinian* comment on the scriptures, and greedily drank the poison, because it quieted my fears, and flattered my abominable pride. The whole system coincided exactly with my inclinations, and the state of my mind. In reading this exposition, sin seemed to lose its native ugliness, and to appear a very small and tolerable evil; man's imper-

fect obedience seemed to shine with an excellency almost divine ; and God appeared so entirely and necessarily merciful, that he could not make any of his creatures miserable, without contradicting his natural propensity. These things influenced my mind so powerfully, that I was enabled to consider myself, notwithstanding a few little blemishes, as upon the whole a very worthy being. At the same time, the mysteries of the gospel being explained away, or brought down to the level of man's comprehension, by such proud and corrupt, though specious reasonings ; by acceding to these sentiments, I was, in my own opinion, in point of understanding and discernment, exalted to a superiority above the generality of mankind ; and I pleased myself in looking down with contempt upon such as were weak enough to believe the orthodox doctrines. Thus I generally soothed my conscience : and, if at any time I was uneasy at the apprehension that I did not thoroughly deserve eternal happiness, and was not entirely fit for heaven, the same book afforded me a soft pillow on which to lull myself to sleep. It argued, and I then thought proved, that there were no *eternal* torments ; and it insinuated, that there were *no* torments except for notorious sinners ; and that such as should just fall short of heaven would sink into their original nothing. With this welcome scheme I silenced all my fears, and told my accusing conscience, that, if I fell short of heaven, I should be annihilated, and never be sensible of my loss. . . . .

“ In this awful state of mind I attempted to obtain admission into holy orders ! . . . . As far as I understood such controversies, I was nearly a Socinian

and Pelagian, and wholly an Arminian. . . . While I was preparing for the solemn office, I lived, as before, in known sin, and in utter neglect of prayer; my whole preparation consisting of nothing else, than an attention to those studies, which were more immediately requisite for reputably passing through the previous examination.

“ Thus, with a heart full of pride and wickedness; my life polluted with many unrepented, unforsaken sins; without one cry for mercy, one prayer for direction or assistance, or for a blessing upon what I was about to do; after having concealed my real sentiments under the mask of general expressions; after having subscribed articles directly contrary to what I believed; and after having blasphemously declared, in the presence of God and of the congregation, in the most solemn manner, sealing it with the Lord’s supper, that I judged myself to be ‘inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take that office upon me,’—not knowing or believing that there was any Holy Ghost;—on September the 20th, 1772, I was ordained a deacon.

“ For ever blessed be the God of all long suffering and mercy, who had patience with such a rebel and blasphemer, such an irreverent trifler with his majesty, and such a presumptuous intruder into his sacred ministry! I never think of this daring wickedness, without being filled with amazement that I am out of hell; without adoring that gracious God, who permitted such an atrocious sinner to live, yea, to serve him, and with acceptance, I trust, to call him Father, and as his minister to speak in his name. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and, all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my*

*soul, and forget not all his benefits ! who forgiveth all thy iniquities, and healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies !* May I fervently love, and very humbly and devotedly serve that God, who hath multiplied his mercies in *abundantly pardoning* my complicated provocations !”

Seldom, I believe, has a prayer been more strikingly answered, than that which my dear father here so humbly and fervently offers ; as his subsequent life, during a period of five and forty years, amply testified.

He proceeds, (still in the Force of Truth,) “ I had considerable difficulties to surmount in obtaining admission into the ministry, arising from my peculiar circumstances ; which likewise rendered my conduct the more inexcusable : and my views, as far as I can ascertain them, were these three : a desire of a less laborious, and more comfortable way of procuring a maintenance, than otherwise I had the prospect of ; the expectation of more leisure to employ in reading, of which I was inordinately fond ; and a proud conceit of my abilities, with a vain glorious imagination, that I should some time distinguish and advance myself in the literary world. These were my ruling motives in taking this bold step : motives as opposite to those which should influence men to enter on the sacred office, as pride is opposite to humility, ambition to contentment in a low estate, and a willingness to be *the least of all, and the servant of all* ; as opposite as love of self, of the world, of *filthy lucre*, and slothful ease, is to the love of God, of souls, and of the laborious work of the ministry. To me there-



fore be the shame of this heinous sin, and to God be all the glory of overruling it for good, I trust, both to unworthy me, and to his dear people, *the church which he hath purchased with his own blood!*"<sup>1</sup>

Having thus brought down the history of my father's life to the period of his ordination, without suppressing one material word which he has written upon the subject, it appears to me that there are two points which may need some apology; meaning by that term, however, rather *defence* than *excuse*.

First, I know not whether some readers may think, that the particulars relative to his admission into holy orders are detailed with an unnecessary minuteness. My answer to such an objection must be, that I cannot allow the introduction into the church of the subject of these memoirs to be put on the same footing with *every* event of the like nature. In its *consequences* it has proved to thousands, and I doubt not will prove to thousands more, of the highest importance. In its *circumstances*, therefore, which were not common ones, and in themselves involve a remarkable display of character, it cannot fail to be interesting to all, who take pleasure in tracing the means by which providence accomplishes its designs, often rendering the evil passions, or evil conduct of man, subservient to the display of the goodness of God.

The other point is one which it is of much greater importance to place in a just light: I mean the severe judgment, as many will think it, which my father passes upon himself and his own conduct. This ex-

<sup>1</sup> See further my father's Practical Observations on the case of "Korah and his company," Numbers xvi.

tends itself to every part of his life: to his early days at school; to his apprenticeship; to his conduct while subsequently resident with his father; and to no period, nor to any event, more remarkably than to his taking upon him the sacred office of the ministry. We read here nothing of the levities or the indiscretions of youth, where real immoralities are intended; nothing of simple improprieties, and the want of greater consideration and more serious thought. The offences of the schoolboy are sins against God: undutifulness to a parent, even though the conduct of that parent be marked by some degree of harshness, is regarded as a crime; and, above all, tampering with solemn subscriptions, and intruding into the sacred office from ambitious, self-indulgent, and other unhallowed motives, is felt as an impiety, which no words are strong enough to describe. Yet, after all, some may be ready to ask, and not without a degree of justice, What was there, at least if one or two exceptions be made, worse than is found in thousands, who are never troubled with any such apprehensions of the enormity of their conduct?—Now I feel that I proceed entirely upon principles which he, whose case gives occasion to the inquiry, would sanction, and, what is still more important, upon the principles of scripture itself, when I return the following answer to this question. Every thing depends upon the standard by which we judge. If the current opinions of mankind be our standard, then it will be easy for us to “make light of sin;” our own sins, and those of others. But if, with the holy character before us—for such he had become before he wrote either of his narratives,—we “enter into the sanctuary of God,” and

judge by the standard of his holy law; especially as it is explained by our blessed Saviour in his sermon on the mount; then the purest and most blameless among us will find reason to cry, even with anguish of spirit, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” If we there obtain some glimpses of the majesty and glory of the “holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty,” then, far from shining in our own eyes, or comparing ourselves, to our own advantage, with our fellow sinners, we shall be prepared, with Job, and David, and Isaiah, and Daniel, and St. Peter, and St. Paul,<sup>1</sup> and Augustine,<sup>2</sup> and a thousand others who have obtained “a good report” in the annals of the church, to exclaim, “I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes.—Wo is me, I am undone!—Remember not against me the sins and offences of my youth!—I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.”—And this is the true explanation of the judgment which my father passes upon his own character and conduct.

And, with respect to the particular part of the above narrative, which relates to the views and motives for entering into holy orders, let me join its author in earnestly soliciting a most serious attention to it, from all those of the clergy whose eye it may meet, and who may never yet have taken such solemn views, as they will think them, of their own office, and of the temper with which it should be undertaken. Many persons of this class are known to have

<sup>1</sup> Job, xlii. Psal. xxv, li. Isa. vi. Luke v. 8. 1 Tim. i. 12—16.

<sup>2</sup> See the affecting and edifying abstract of his Confessions in Milner's Church Hist. vol. ii.—And on the whole subject, see my father's Discourse on Repentance.

been brought to a new, and, I must be allowed to call it, a better sense of the subject, by what my father has already laid before the public concerning his own case: and my prayer is, that that case, when thus anew, and more fully presented, may be attended with like effects to many more.

The reasons assigned in the former of these two reflections induce me not to omit an incident, yet more minute, but still having its place to fill in bringing about the event under consideration. My father has recorded it as follows.

“ One circumstance, very trivial in itself, was so important in its consequences, that I am not willing to pass it over. At the sheepshearing which followed my disgraceful return from Alford, in 1762, a small ewe lamb, marked with a black spot on the side, in rather a peculiar manner, attracted my notice: and my father, being probably in high good humour on the occasion, gave it me; and, though kept among his sheep, it was branded as mine. Though I was always nearly moneyless, and never possessed a guinea in my life, till I was above twenty years old, I never yielded to the temptation of selling any of the lambs which this ewe brought me: so that by management, in exchanging male lambs for young ewes, notwithstanding the loss of nine of my little flock, in one year, by the rot, I possessed sixty-eight sheep, besides lambs, when I attempted to obtain orders. These, after many objections, my father purchased for 68*l.*: and this constituted the whole of my fortune. I had not a friend in the world who offered to advance me five pounds in my exigency;

and I verily believe, that, if the success or failure of my application had depended upon it, no one would have been found able and willing to advance money sufficient for my expenses. When my father had granted his consent, I had no expectation, and perhaps, after all the vexation which my ill-behaviour had caused him, I had no fair reason to expect, that he would give any thing further. But with this 68*l.* I bought needful books; boarded myself for some time at Boston; procured suitable clothes; paid all travelling expenses, and those attending my ordination; and entered on my curacies possessed of twenty guineas,—a sum which, at that time, was indeed to me considerable. On such trivial incidents do the most important events depend. Without this lamb, and the sheep which in this way I acquired, as far as I can see, my whole plan of entering into holy orders must have failed.

From a series of my father's letters to two of his sisters, extending from within one month after his quitting Braytoft, in April, 1772, till near the close of his life, for which I am indebted to my esteemed relative, the Rev. Thomas Webster, I am happy here to confirm, what I before took occasion to infer, the speedy revival of sentiments of filial duty in his breast, whatever irritation he might at the time have felt and expressed. Not a sentence of a disrespectful kind towards his father occurs in these free and confidential communications; but they contain many which express great respect and regard. May 17, 1772, he says, "In my *actions* to my father, I never offended; in my *words*, I have too often: but my chief desire is to avoid that for the future."—Sep-

tember 18, 1773: "Surely nothing can afford more satisfaction to the considerate breast, than to comfort the heart of an aged parent." This indeed is spoken with especial reference to his mother.—January 5, 1774; of his father and mother: "May all the blessings we have each received from them (perhaps not the most inconsiderable when the most unpalatable,) be tenfold repaid them, here or hereafter, by the God of mercies!"—July 20, 1774: "To give pain or uneasiness to others I hardly bear; but to give pain premeditatedly to a parent, even by innocent conduct, wounds my sensibility, and staggers my resolution, even where I think my duty is at stake."—What a tender concern he felt for his father, when he had himself become more decidedly religious, we may have future opportunities of discerning.

Indeed justice requires the remark, that this whole series of letters, from the very first, conveys a more favourable impression, than his own report would have led us to expect, of his social character. The constant, copious, and confidential correspondence kept up with his sisters would, of itself, be a very favourable indication upon this subject. But, in addition to this, the letters throughout breathe strong affection to all his family, and show him to have taken a lively interest in their concerns; and to have been zealous to serve them, as well as qualified to do so, by great acuteness and sound sense.

## CHAPTER III.

### FROM HIS ORDINATION TO HIS MARRIAGE.

WE now proceed to contemplate the subject of our memoirs in his new and higher character of a minister of the established church.

“After the ordination,” he says, “having officiated on two Sundays at Martin, in almost an empty church, (for service was very seldom performed there,) I removed to Stoke Goldington, and entered on my new curacies; boarding with a parishioner for twenty guineas a year.

“My regular services were at Stoke and Weston Underwood: but my rector was subdean of Lincoln; and, when he went thither into residence, he procured other supplies for Weston, and I officiated at Gayhurst, where George Wrighte, Esq. had a seat. This soon brought me acquainted with the family. Mr. W. was a descendant of Sir Nathan Wrighte, Lord Keeper in the reign of Queen Anne: and Mrs. W. was the only daughter of Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls, by Lady Anne, daughter of the Earl of Halifax. They were wealthy and liberal, and lived in a most hospitable manner. They had been married several years, but had only one son, quite a child, who was considered as heir to large estates possessed by relatives, who had no children.

“Having several times dined at the house on

Sundays, after my second service, I was repeatedly invited to dine with parties on other occasions: and, notwithstanding my rusticity, I received so many invitations from different quarters, that I was compelled to be almost rude, in order to secure time for those studies to which I now applied with indefatigable zeal.

“ After a time Mr. W. employed me to put his library in order, and to make a catalogue of the books; which, as consisting of the libraries of both families, were numerous and valuable, but in a state of the utmost confusion. I had no pecuniary remuneration; but a considerable number of duplicates, sufficient to recompence my labour. This service I contrived to render without much entrenching on my hours of study.

“ Thus commenced an acquaintance, which produced important effects on my future life.

“ Soon after my ordination I learned, that clergymen, not educated at the university, might enter at Cambridge, and, without residence, might after nine years take the degree of bachelor of divinity. This was represented to me as one step towards distinctions and advantages, to which I was sufficiently alive. Having therefore obtained from a relation a letter to Dr. Caryll, master of Jesus College, I went to Cambridge; and, on exhibiting in several circles my stock of Latin and Greek, now somewhat increased, I met with that kind and degree of applause, which abundantly elated my inexperienced heart. I then entered at Clare Hall, where my name stood for several years: but, though the expense did not much exceed four guineas a year, when I had a family, I found it



more than I could conveniently spare; and, my expectation and desire of preferments and distinctions being superseded by earnestness in the grand concerns of vital religion, I took my name off the boards. In this, I have for some years doubted whether I acted wisely.”

Alluding to this visit to Cambridge, he says in a letter of June 26, 1773, “ My father, I doubt not, has informed you of what I did at Cambridge. If it pleases God to prolong my life, I shall, I trust, reap advantage, and be enabled to do more good than I could otherwise have done.”

Some other topics connected with my father’s progress may here properly receive illustration from his printed account of himself, and from his private letters.

His *studies*, as they were at this time the object nearest his heart, may be first noticed. “ No sooner,” he tells us in the *Force of Truth*, “ was I fixed in a curacy, than with close application I sat down to the study of the learned languages, and such other subjects as I considered most needful in order to lay the foundation of my future advancement. And oh that I were now as diligent in serving God, as I was then in serving self and ambition! I spared no pains, I shunned, as much as I well could, all acquaintance and diversions, and retrenched from my usual hours of sleep, that I might keep more closely to this business.”

My memory much deceives me if I have not repeatedly heard my father state, that, at the period of his visit to Cambridge, about nine months after his ordination, he had read through the entire works

of Josephus in the original Greek: which would of itself be no ordinary proof of his diligence, in the circumstances in which he was placed.

But the following extract of a letter to one of his sisters, dated September 18, 1773, will present the best picture of the ardour of his mind in these pursuits at the time referred to.—“ I have for some time pursued my studies with assiduity, but I have only lately got to pursue them with method. I am now about three hours in the day engaged in the Hebrew. The books I use are a Hebrew Bible, grammars, and lexicons, the noted Septuagint, or Greek translation so much talked of, and a comment—would it were my father’s!” Alas! his father’s was the *Socinian* commentary, noticed in the *Force of Truth*, as the source from which he had already imbibed so much poison.—“ I began at the first chapter of Genesis, and I intend to go through the whole Bible in that manner. You will see the manifold advantage of thus reading the scriptures. The original text, a Greek translation two thousand years old and above, our translation, and comments, read carefully, and compared together, word by word, cannot fail to give a deep insight into the sense of the scriptures; and at the same time two languages are unitedly improving. The same I am doing in the Greek, and profane history. I am reading old Herodotus in the original, in Latin, and in English. For each book read, whether ancient or modern history, I have my maps laid before me, and trace each incident by the map; and in some degree also fix the chronology. So that, though the languages seem my principal study, history, geography, chronology, divinity, go

hand in hand. Neither is logic neglected. I have set about that in some degree; not the dry scholastic forms, but the useful art of tracing our judgments to their origin, and building our reasons or inferences on due foundations; or the art of arguing justly from well-grounded principles.—In the writing way I have just now begun a very arduous task, but, I hope, not too arduous. I have fixed upon our Saviour's sermon on the mount, and have undertaken in a course of sermons to go through it. My design is to show, that in that short discourse is comprehended every Christian virtue, every moral duty; that it is not, as is generally apprehended, a loose set of detached maxims, but a regular, consistent system of morality. What I shall make of it I know not: but I think I shall, by well considering each article, comparing it with other parts of scripture, and with the situation of man in this world, find out many beauties, at least to me, before undiscovered. I have already found in it far more than ever I observed before, or than any authors I have consulted have noticed. I will assure you the propriety of each sentence, the wisdom, the thorough knowledge of the human heart, appear to me most admirable.—If, in going through it in the manner I propose, and have engaged to do, in a course of sermons, I should please myself and others, I shall perhaps throw the whole into some other form and communicate it to the public. At least I made choice of the subject not without having some such design in view; and my utmost care and attention shall be used, to try whether I cannot make it deserving of a share of the public attention.

“ You now see in what manner I spend my time. I find my taste for study grow on me every day. I only fear I shall be, like the miser, too covetous. In fact, I really grudge every hour that I employ otherwise. Others go out by choice, and stay at home by constraint; but I ever stay at home by choice, and go out because I am persuaded it is necessary. In every other expense I am grown a miser: I take every method to save: but here I am prodigal. No cost do I in the least grudge to procure advantageous methods of pursuing my studies. So far is a multiplicity of studies, a diversity of pursuits, from overburdening my memory, that, by exercising it, I find it in a high degree more retentive; as well as the comprehending faculty more quick.—Nothing can give greater satisfaction than these considerations do. I proceed with alacrity; I think with expedition. Of the Hebrew, some twenty weeks ago I knew not a letter: and I have now read through one hundred and nineteen of the Psalms, and twenty-three chapters of Genesis; and commonly now read two chapters in the time above mentioned, tracing every word to its original, unfolding every verbal difficulty.—But enough: I know to whom I write. I am sensible that these things will give you some pleasure in the perusal, and that you will overlook any spice of vanity which may appear.”

All this must be confessed to be not a little extraordinary for one who had so recently thrown off the shepherd's frock!—What were his more mature sentiments on the view above taken of the sermon on the mount may be seen in his commentary, particularly on Matt. vii. 24—27. He there remarks;

“ Most certainly, the unchangeable God never meant to recommend one part of his revealed will, by disparaging another. . . . This sermon, doubtless, contains the grand outlines of Christian *practice*, and none who, on Christian *principles*, observe to do according to it, will come short of salvation. But Christian *principles*, or *doctrines*, must be learned from other parts of the sacred oracles.”

After the preceding account of his studies, we shall not be surprised at the remarks which follow on the spending of his time, in a letter dated one week later:

“ September 25, 1773.—We have had diversions on diversions here; but they did not divert me from my course.—(A pun—a sure sign of a vacuum.)—Newport races and assemblies; Northampton races and assemblies: but none of them did I deign to honour with my presence. A great honour truly should I have been to an assembly! a man of importance at a horse-race!—What is worse than all, I can neither shoot, nor hunt, nor course, nor fish worth a farthing: neither seem I to have any desire to learn. Poor creature! says one, how does he spend his time? He is fit for nothing, says another: I really pity the man, observes a third. But I however find no great difficulty in spending my time: neither do I think myself so much an object of pity: and there are those who think me not entirely unfit for some things.—I really do pity those who cannot spend their time without murdering it by a continued round of diversions. It certainly proceeds from an inward discontent: their own breasts afford no subject for agreeable reflection. They fly to outward glittering objects to

supply the deficiency; but are constantly disappointed, and sent to others.

‘ O lost to virtue, lost to manly thought,  
Lost to the noble sallies of the soul,  
Who think it solitude to be alone!’

I love at some times society, but I love at others solitude equally well: but I never go into company in order to get rid of my time, because I am tired of it.”

In another letter, about three months afterwards, he says: “ The Giver of every good gift has made my interest, my pleasure, and my duty, as it were, all dependent on one another. My pursuits of the *advantages* of life, and of *credit*, are thrown into such a channel, that, while they form my highest *gratification*, they best promote that more important *business* I am upon; and will succeed or fail in proportion as I do my duty, and contribute my share towards the good of mankind.”

From this extract it appears, that he was not so immersed in his literary pursuits, as altogether to forget “ that more important business,” which claimed his attention as a parochial minister. And repeated proofs occur, even from the first, of what many, at least, would esteem considerable professional diligence; though he was as yet very much a stranger to the right means of promoting the spiritual interests of men, and to the true spring of a Christian minister’s activity;<sup>1</sup> and though, in his Force of Truth, he will only give himself credit, for having “ attended

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

just enough to the public duties of his station, to support a decent character," which he deemed "subservient to his main design."

Previously, however, to adducing any of the proofs referred to, we may advert to the report which he makes of the state of the country into which he had now removed, and, in particular, of his own parishes. It is, upon the whole, very unfavourable. "The country," he says, "is pleasant; the villages large and populous; but the people poor,<sup>1</sup> ignorant, and idle. Half of them have little more knowledge, save the art of lace-making, than they were born with. There are no schools any where for the poor: and they have no means of instruction but at church, where the greater part never come."—The latter clause applies especially to Stoke, the inhabitants of which parish he estimates at seven or eight hundred.—Of their religion he says, "Those that have any are almost all methodists and fanatics, of one sort or other; and for my part I regard them as the best portion of my parish, for any religion must be better than none."—His other parish of Weston, he thought, "afforded a better prospect," and appeared, "more regular and religious." "The greater part, indeed, were Roman catholics, and many methodists: however," he says, "they all seem to be of *some* religion, and I have my regular congregation as constantly as I go. . . . Taking the whole country, I think it remarkably poor and ignorant; though within fifty miles of the metropolis of the most polished country in the world: but yet what part of the world is it,

<sup>1</sup> He notes 1s. 6d. a day, without meat, as the highest wages in harvest time.

in which one meets not with sensible and agreeable people? . . . . In the darkest and most ignorant ages we find characters like lamps placed to enlighten the whole.”

Such was the scene of service first assigned to my father as a clergyman, and nearly such that in which he spent the first thirteen years of his ministerial life. I now present those traces which remain of his earlier labours in it.

From the first, the pains he took in preparation for the pulpit appear to have been exemplary. In his first letter from Stoke, in October, 1772, he says, “ Sermons I write two a week :” and again, half a year afterwards, “ I have no spare time, having written full seven sermons, each thirty-five minutes long, in the three weeks since my return from London,—where he had taken priest’s orders. Such diligence appears to have been a sort of elementary ingredient of his character, and certainly it gave a promise of his future success. May it not also suggest a salutary admonition to many, who it is to be hoped, are actuated by purer principles than at that time influenced the subject of these memoirs? Their views, be it supposed, are more elevated, but do they call forth even equal exertions?

In the same letter he laments, that, “ after preaching two of the most forcible discourses in his power,” he had been able to collect only “ twenty-six or twenty-seven communicants.” And in another letter, of rather earlier date, he says, “ Whether I shall be able to make any reformation among my parishioners, I much doubt; but I tell them their duty pretty freely.”



As we proceed forward, I trust, we find the desire of doing good gradually gathering strength.—It may be remarked that my father quitted his residence at Stoke in November, 1773, and lodged at Weston from that time till his marriage, somewhat more than a year afterwards. From Weston he writes, January 5, 1774, “I wonder at people thinking they cannot do good. The circle that I move in at present is so contracted, that the circumference almost touches the centre; yet I should belie my own heart, should I say that I never had it in my power to do good. I hope (for God alone knows the heart,) that I really have been instrumental, in my calling, towards instilling better principles into the minds of some of my flock. This, at least, is my desire: from this I promise myself present satisfaction, and something in future of more consequence. Since I have got to Weston, I have made a point of reading prayers on the festivals, though I have nothing allowed for it. The parish are in great part Roman catholics, and I would not have it said, that *they* have all the religion. Where the piety is rational, and free from the superstition we expressly blame, I would show them, that we do not disregard it. . . . A very pretty congregation comes constantly to church, and I do not grudge my trouble. I would also read prayers on Wednesday and Friday; but I might, by carrying it too far, and too hastily, do less good.”

The last extract which I shall introduce, is dated a year later, at Stoke, whither he had returned on his marriage.—“Saturday evening is appropriated to catechizing the children of the parish, who come in great numbers for instruction. There are therefore

but five other evenings, and it is a retired week indeed, if one of them be not engaged. Now in this time"—the evenings, for his mornings were otherwise occupied—"the plan I have laid down requires me to compose or transcribe two sermons, almost constantly. . . . Stoke is an ignorant, and for that reason a wicked place. I would wish to do something to remove both the cause and the effect. They are also as poor as they are ignorant and bad. Now, assisting their bodily wants is the best means to prepare the way for assisting their other wants. But my station in life prevents my doing much in that way on my own account. But, by means of my intimacy at Mr. Wrighte's, I am not totally destitute of opportunity. When any person is sick, I make it my business to visit him, both in my pastoral function, and as a friend, to inquire into his disorder and circumstances: which done I represent the case to Mrs. W., who has not hitherto failed to consider one so represented. This prepares the way for good advice and instruction, (which I do not withhold,) and also renders others more willing to attend to me.—A parcel of little books on various plain practical subjects had lain at Mr. W.'s some time. I begged to have the disposal of them, and, having given some away, I told the receivers to send any other persons to me who wished for like tracts. I soon had customers enough, and distributed a considerable number about the parish. I intend to make broad hints for some more.—Next I have undertaken to explain the catechism in a course of sermons, and also to expound it in a more summary manner to the children, who attend for this purpose; being persuaded that as much

good may be done in forming the minds of youth, and instilling into them moral and religious truth, as in preaching to the more advanced in years. . . . This is the plan I have laid: and to execute it to my own satisfaction engrosses no small proportion of my time and attention. I do not suppose ——, when he returns, will like me the better for the care I take: but, as I do what I consider my duty, I am no ways anxious about it. . . . At the present, I am entirely satisfied with my lot, and my portion of enjoyment; and my religion bids me not be solicitous about futurity.”

But we have here outstripped the regular course of events, and must return to occurrences, some at least, of which contributed to the improvement, pretty clearly indicated by this extract to have taken place in his ministerial character.

In June 1773, he lost a sister, Mrs. Caborn, who, by her marriage, had been placed in not a very favourable situation. This event appears to have affected him very much. He thus speaks of it in his reply to his elder sister, who had communicated the information to him:

“ To describe to you the emotions of my mind, on the receipt of your letter, the mixed passions and feelings with which reflection furnished me, would require more art than my pen possesses. A tenderness inseparable from affection arose, and over and over I read your letter, and as oft bedewed it with tears; not of unmixed sorrow, but of a tender regret, mollified with some not unpleasing reflections: yet the damp that it has cast on my spirits will require time and reason to dissipate it. The situation in which I was placed during the younger part of my life made me,

till within these few years, love her the best of all my brothers and sisters. Neither have I ever experienced a diminution of that affection: only, as my judgment increased, with it my regard for the other branches of the family wonderfully increased also. Sincerely I thank you, dear sister, for what you said in regard to my going to see her, (when in Lincolnshire,) which fixed my wavering resolution: had I not gone, an almost incurable stab had been given to my peace."

He expresses a purpose to take upon him the education of her younger son, to whom he was godfather. He considered this as a duty incumbent upon him. "Now it has pleased God," he says "to take the only parent, who was at all likely to supersede my care, it certainly belongs to me to see that he be instructed in those things, which I promised in his name, as soon as he is capable of learning them." Accordingly he some time afterwards received this nephew into his family; and, scanty as his own means were, supported him, till at a proper age he bound him apprentice to the business of a grocer, which he still follows in London.

The next incident recorded in the narrative appears to have taken place about the same period.

"While I resided at Stoke, the brother of the person with whom I boarded, an apothecary at Olney, often called; and finding me conversible, discussed with me a variety of subjects. Among the rest, he mentioned Mr. Newton, as a very singular character."—It can hardly be needful to say, that this was the Rev. John Newton, then curate of Olney, afterwards rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, London. His name

stands blank (Mr. ——) in the editions of the Force of Truth which have hitherto been published. He had been curate of Olney since his ordination in 1764.—“He gave Mr. N. full credit for blameless and benevolent conduct, and for diligence as a minister: but he was ‘a methodist and an enthusiast to a very high degree.’ ‘I cannot,’ said the apothecary, ‘tell what judgment to form of his preaching; it is like nothing which I ever heard: I wish you would come and hear him, and give me your opinion. He preaches on a Thursday evening: come and dine with me, and we will go to church together.’ This was accordingly settled and executed. I sat fronting the pulpit, and verily thought Mr. N. looked full on me when he came into the desk: and, when he named his text, to my great astonishment it was this, *Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?* (Acts xiii. 9, 10.) As I knew that he preached *extempore*, I took it for granted that he had chosen the text purposely on my account. He observed, indeed, that ministers in the present day, not being under any immediate or infallible influence of the Holy Spirit, ought not to imitate the decided and severe language of the apostle: and he then undertook to show what were the right ways of the Lord, and to point out the wickedness and danger of persisting in endeavours to pervert or oppose them. But I thought his doctrine abstruse, imaginative, and irrational; and his manner uncouth; and the impression, that, though Elimas was named, I was in-

tended, abode with me for a long time: nor was it wholly effaced till I discovered, some years afterwards, that he was regularly expounding the Acts of the Apostles, and that this passage came in course that evening; and that, in fact, he neither saw nor thought of me. The idea, however, that I was aimed at, neither alarmed nor irritated me: but, at first, served me as a subject of merriment; and, afterwards, when I knew him better, but had not yet obtained the just explanation of the case, it appeared to me unaccountable. Yet, alas! at that time the passage was but too appropriate to my character and conduct.—After this I never heard Mr. N. preach, till my creed accorded with his in all the great outlines.”

The Force of Truth, however, records somewhat in Mr. N.'s example, which soon after this time proved more useful to my father than his preaching, and no doubt essentially conduced to that increased diligence in pastoral duties, which we have already contemplated.

“In January, 1774,” he there states, “two of my parishioners, a man and his wife, lay at the point of death. I had heard of the circumstance: but, according to my general custom, not being sent for, I took no notice of it; till one evening, the woman being now dead, and the man dying, I heard that my neighbour, Mr. N., had been several times to visit them. Immediately my conscience reproached me with being shamefully negligent, in sitting at home, within a few doors of dying persons, my general hearers, and never going to visit them. Directly it occurred to me, that, whatever contempt I might have for Mr. N.'s doctrines, I must acknowledge his

practice to be more consistent with the ministerial character than my own. He must have more zeal and love for souls than I had, or he would not have walked so far to visit and supply my lack of care to those, who, as far as I was concerned, might have been left to perish in their sins.—This reflection affected me so much, that, without delay, and very earnestly, yea with tears, I besought the Lord to forgive my past neglect; and I resolved thenceforth to be more attentive to this duty: which resolution, though at first formed in ignorant dependence on my own strength, I have, by divine grace, been enabled hitherto to keep.—I went immediately to visit the survivor: and the affecting sight of one person already dead, and another expiring in the same chamber, served more deeply to impress my serious convictions: so that from that time I have constantly visited the sick of my parishes, as far as I have had opportunity, and have endeavoured, to the best of my knowledge, to perform that essential part of a parish minister's duty."

This occurred at Weston, where my father then resided; and, from a letter written at the same time, it appears, that the man and his wife referred to, having lived forty-four years together, were both buried at once in the same grave.—We return to the narrative.

"As curate of Weston Underwood I became acquainted with the family of the Higgins'; from whom I received many favours as long as I held that curacy. Bartholomew Higgins, Esq. senior, was the friend mentioned in the Force of Truth, who induced me to read the conclusion of Bishop Burnetts History of his Own Time. He also expressed dissatis-

faction with my general doctrine, as not sufficiently evangelical; and he intimated topics on which he wished me to speak more fully. But, when afterwards I became more thoroughly in earnest in applying evangelical truth to practical purposes, he thought I went too far; especially when I advanced the sentiments called Calvinistic. But this subject will again come under notice more regularly hereafter."

This perusal of that part of Burnet's history, which relates to the clergy, was attended with important effects, which the Force of Truth thus explains: "I was considerably instructed and impressed by it: I was convinced that my entrance into the ministry had been the result of very wrong motives; was preceded by a very unsuitable preparation; and accompanied with very improper conduct. Some uneasiness was also excited in my mind concerning my neglect of the important duties of that high calling; and, though I was enslaved by sin, and too much engaged in other studies, and in love with this present world to relinquish my flattering pursuit of reputation and preferment, and to change the course of my life, studies, and employments; yet by intervals I experienced desires and purposes, at some future period to devote myself wholly to the work of the ministry, in the manner to which he exhorts the clergy. . . . At this time I lived without any secret religion. . . . My convictions," however, "would no longer be silenced or appeased". . . . and "I was enabled to enter upon a form of devotion. Formal enough indeed it was in some respects, for I neither knew that Mediator through whom, nor that Spirit by whom, prayers are offered up with acceptance unto the Father.



Yet though utterly in the dark as to the true and living way to the throne of grace, I am persuaded there were even then seasons, when I was enabled to rise above a mere form, and to offer petitions so far *spiritual* as to be accepted and answered."

Thus was my father's mind evidently moving on, even at this time, towards that happy consummation at which it at length arrived; and thus did a succession of apparently accidental circumstances conspire to advance his progress. But for the present our attention is called to another subject, thus introduced in his narrative.

"All my views of advancing myself in the world seemed to require, that I should for some time, at least, live unmarried: but I had always resolved and avowed my resolution, to marry as soon as I should have the prospect of maintaining a family: and no ambitious projects altered that purpose. After many merciful disappointments, as I have since known them to be, I became acquainted with Mrs. Jane Kell; whom I first met at a christening, and won her money at cards!"—It may be added, that the perfect composure and good temper, with which she bore her loss, first attracted my father's attention to her.—"She was of a family in reputable circumstances at Hexham, in Northumberland:" but her father having never profited by the wise man's admonition, *He that hateth suretyship is sure*, impoverished himself to pay other men's debts; and his daughter Jane "having acquired competent skill in various departments, entered, at an early age, into the service of Lady Anne Jekyll. She was now Mrs. Wrighte's housekeeper, and had continued so long in the family,

with high approbation, that she was respected almost as a relative. On every conversation I had with her she rose in my esteem; and after rather more hesitation than was usual with me, I opened my mind to her by letter, which at first produced some rather singular incidents; but at length terminated in our marriage, December 5, 1774."

I shall here take the liberty of saying, that, though my dear mother was not found in an elevated station, she was, throughout life, and in all circumstances in which she ever was placed, a "help meet" for him to whom she was united. She was one of those thoroughly prudent, disinterested, friendly, cheerful, and kind persons, who conciliate the esteem of all that converse with them, whether superiors, inferiors, or equals. After all the abatements which it may be thought requisite to make in the report of an *admirer*, I believe there was much justice in the account which my father gave of her to his sister, July 20, 1774: "Who seems to me to possess whatever can render woman amiable—beauty excepted: whom nature has blessed with a variety of her choicest gifts,—sense, prudence, sensibility: who has had many advantages of education, has read much, and is fit to appear with credit in any company: who has a heart fraught with the most virtuous and generous sentiments, and has given such proofs of it, as are fully conclusive, and which, coming to my knowledge by such means as contain something of the marvellous, cannot be disputed. No woman in the world is better adapted for the management of a family."

One of the proofs of generosity referred to was her declining my father's first proposals, though per-

fectly agreeable to her, because she believed the connexion would be “disadvantageous to him.” This he learned directly from Mrs. Wrighte, without Mrs. W.’s being able, either previously, or at the time she told him the fact, to divine who was the person that had been refused.

I possess one, and only one letter of her writing,—the first to which she subscribed her newly acquired name: and as it presents a glimpse of the Lincolnshire family, viewed, it must be confessed, under favourable circumstances, and will at least exhibit the amiable temper of the writer’s mind, I shall venture to insert a part of it.

“Braytoft, December 13, 1774.—My dear mother, Let me once more intreat the favour of your intercession to our heavenly Father, for the continuance of happiness to your now happy daughter. You are already informed, that Monday the fifth gave you a son and me a husband, of whose goodness I could say more than my paper will hold: so I shall cut it short, by assuring you he is every thing that I wish. My dear friend has likewise told you that we are now in Lincolnshire, and at present in the house with his worthy father and mother. What would I give for a head and a pen equal to the task of describing to you this agreeable pair, and their worthy children. Indeed it is comfortable to see Mr. and Mrs. Scott set round by their sons and daughters and grandchildren, all equally sensible and good. . . . They really treat me in a manner as if their son, brother, or nephew had married a person equal in fortune to his merits. God grant that I may continue deserving of their kindness and relationship! . . . Mr. and Mrs.

Wrighte accompanied me to church—though it was the first time of her being out to walk after a long and dangerous illness: and Mr. W. gave me away<sup>1</sup>. . . I am, in every respect, your dutiful and affectionate daughter,

J. SCOTT.

“ P. S. This is the first time I have made use of this respectable name.”

The next thing which occurs in my father's narrative, after the mention of his marriage, is a statement of his finances and prospects at the time. After some demur, I have determined to allow him unreservedly to lay this also, and other passages of the same kind, before the reader, because they both illustrate his character, and tend to enforce one of the great lessons which his history suggests—the duty and safety of implicitly trusting in providence, notwithstanding a provision apparently very inadequate, while we devote ourselves to the duties of our station, as the servants of God.

“ What my wife had saved,” he says, “ (which might have been more than double what it was, had not her liberality, especially to her aged mother, deducted from it,) with the presents she received, purchased us sufficient furniture. My income, with Busby's Lectures once in three years, amounted to nearly 60*l*. I had also lately been engaged by Mr. Wrighte, to teach his son the first rudiments of learning, going over to his house, at three miles distance, every day for the purpose: for which he paid me 30*l*. a year: and I had further a good prospect of receiving a few pupils into my house, when settled. So that, taking into account the comparative cheapness of

<sup>1</sup> Mr. and Mrs. W. also stood sponsors for her elder children.

living at that time, I have seldom in subsequent years, had a fairer prospect of adequate support; except as I have learned to trust in Him for temporal provision, as well as eternal salvation, who *clothes the lilies and feeds the birds of the air*: of which I at that time knew little.

“ The union thus formed proved to me, in all respects, an *inexpressible* mercy. Even at the time I had some confused sense of the goodness of God in it; and, in a poor blind way, attempted both to thank him for it, and to purpose devoting myself to his service in the work of the ministry: though I then scarcely knew any thing of that sacred service.

“ So far was the step I had taken from losing me any favour with my former friends, as I had previously apprehended it might, that it seemed to raise me in their estimation, for having, as they expressed, it, the good sense to discern and value what was highly estimable in one situate as my wife had been: and, had no material change taken place in my religious sentiments and conduct, I am persuaded I should have met with steady encouragement in my plans. Mr. Wrighte especially, with manifest cordiality, took vigorous measures to procure me a living: and as he had, in previously disposing of some preferments in his gift, obliged more than one of the superior clergy, he entertained no doubt of success.

“ Neither my wife nor myself had been much in the way of religious people, according to my present interpretation of that term; neither of us understood the grand outlines of the gospel; yet we were both impressed with a strong sense of the truth and importance of the Christian religion, in a general

view of it: but her impressions were the deeper, and had far less, from false principles and evil habits, to counteract them. Even before we were fixed in a settled habitation, the thought seemed to occur to us both, almost at the same time, that we ought to pray together; and accordingly I read some prayers from a book; and when, with a female servant, we entered on a temporary dwelling of our own, I immediately began family worship, though I had never lived in any family where it was practised, nor even been present at such a service, except once, which was in the house of a dissenting minister.<sup>1</sup>

“At first I only used a form of prayer from a manual belonging to my wife. After a little time I read a chapter of the Bible before the prayer: and, as my views of religion gradually improved, I aimed at something more evangelical, and exchanged my manual for Jenks’s Devotions. But, had I duly considered the subject, the Common Prayer Book of our church, with a little arrangement, would have supplied me with far more suitable words, than any book of the kind I had then seen, or have ever yet seen. Merely, indeed, to read the common prayer, as appointed for public worship, must, in general, be both inadequate, inappropriate, and in many things superfluous, to a family: but a selection of collects, parts of collects, and extracts from the litany, varied as circumstances should require, I am now fully convinced, might be rendered, in all respects, preferable to any other forms which have been published.

“I afterwards wrote, on particular occasions, such

’ “The Rev. Mr. Bull, of Newport Pagnell.”

prayers as I thought proper to be added to the form : and, at length, I was gradually led to adopt the method of extemporary prayer, which I judged, and do still judge, far better for domestic worship, than any forms can be ; both as admitting of adaptation to the varying circumstances of families, and the cases of friends and relatives, to be remembered in our prayers ; and also as giving scope to more enlargement in intercession according to occurring events, for all sorts and conditions of men. By degrees also I proceeded to expound, as well as read the scriptures to my family.

“ From this beginning, I do not know that, during more than thirty-eight years, the daily worship of God in my family, morning and evening, has ever been interrupted, except when I was ill, or from home : and, indeed, when that has been the case, some one of my household has generally supplied my place.

“ On this I look back with peculiar gratitude, as one grand means of my uncommon measure of domestic comfort, and of bringing down on my children the blessings which God has graciously bestowed upon them. And, though the time which I have allotted to this service has been, for many years, far longer than is generally deemed sufficient or expedient, yet, by a punctual observance of an appointed hour, and the adjustment of domestic affairs to the plan, as known and invariable, no inconvenience worthy of notice has resulted from it. Nor have I, as many complain in excuse for great brevity, found my domestics in general show symptoms of weariness and inattention.—My evening worship is much

shorter than that of the morning; and for many years past it has taken place, in all ordinary cases, at a pretty early hour; which, where it can be practised, appears much preferable.—In numerous instances I have had visitants, especially relatives, to whom I clearly perceived that my family worship was disagreeable; and some who would not so much as by a change of posture profess to join in our prayers: but I never once omitted the service, or altered the method of it, on that account; and in some cases the parties have been softened into a more cordial concurrence with us.”

My dear father having here dwelt at some length on one of the most remarkable features of his domestic economy, it may be advisable to despatch the subject, in what would otherwise have been a premature place for its introduction. I apprehend no reflecting person can have enjoyed the advantage of being repeatedly present at his morning family worship, without being forcibly struck with it. His expositions on these occasions frequently rose above what any written comment can be expected to reach, in copiousness, minute application, spirit, and often elevation of thought. Many times I have wished that his picture could have been taken while he was expounding to his family. I have never seen his soul more thrown into his countenance than on these occasions.—Every topic, almost, of doctrine or duty here came successively under review, as he passed through the scriptures, particularly the New Testament, in order; and the very familiarity with which they were illustrated, and brought down to all the occurrences of life, made the exposition doubly inter-



esting and useful. To what passed here, I am disposed especially to attribute it, that not a servant could spend any time in his family, and attend to what was delivered, without becoming better informed in Christian doctrine, and better instructed in the detail of the duties and proprieties of life, than religious persons in a much superior station are usually found to be.—And then the prayer, which followed, was certainly one of the finest specimens of “supplication, intercession, thanksgiving” for those present and for “all men,” that can be conceived. Such enlargement, both as to the subjects and the matter of the petitions, I have not elsewhere heard. The scripture, which had been read and commented upon, usually gave the direction to the former part of this act of devotion: and here he had by habit and meditation, and by entering at the time into the spirit of the passage, acquired a readiness in seizing every part of it in all its bearings, and turning it into matter of supplication; which brought it again under review in the most edifying manner. Whatever was peculiar in the circumstances of any persons present, was then brought before “the throne of the heavenly grace,” in a manner which showed at once the piety, the wisdom, and the benevolence of him who led the service, and often proved affecting, never, I think, painful to the parties concerned. From those present, and all the branches of the family, with their immediate connexions and friends, he launched forth to his parishioners and people; to the various congregations and divisions of “Christ’s holy catholic church;” to all the “ministers of God’s holy word and sacraments,” and all “seminaries of learning and religious educa-

tion ;” to his country and all orders of men in church and state,—specially all those “ who in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity ;” to the surrounding nations, with a particular reference to passing events ; to the extension of Christ’s kingdom in the world ; to the state of Jews, heathens, and Mohammedans ; to all the various exertions now making to instruct the ignorant, to reclaim the vicious, to relieve the oppressed, and to bring on those happy days, when “ the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the seas ;” and so for “ the whole world of mankind.” His petitions relative to these, and almost every other topic that could be named, were often most appropriate and striking,—while he implored and pleaded for the raising up in all nations of “ kings that should resemble David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and prove reformers of their people, as well as *nursing fathers of the church* ; for governors, in all the distant provinces of our own and other empires, disinterested, zealous, and unimpeachable, like Daniel and Nehemiah ; for bishops, throughout the church, like Timothy and Titus.”—Indeed the subject of his remarkable spirit of intercessory prayer will repeatedly come under our notice. Here, therefore, I would conclude with remarking upon the whole, that to his constant and edifying observance of family worship, in connexion with the steady, consistent spirit and conduct, which, notwithstanding imperfections incident to human nature, they could not fail to remark in him, is, I am persuaded, very much to be traced, not only the blessing of God which, I trust, has descended on his own family, but the

further striking and important fact,—that in very few instances has a servant, or a young person, or indeed any person, passed any length of time under his roof, without appearing to be brought permanently under the influence of religious principle. I consider him as having been singularly blessed in this respect. And yet it was not much his practice to address himself closely and minutely, as some have done with very good effect, to such persons individually. It was not so much by preaching directly to them, as by living before them; making an edifying use of incidents and occasions; and being so constantly instructive, devout, and benevolent in family worship; that, under the blessing of God, he produced so striking an impression upon them. This added tenfold force to whatever else they heard from him in his public ministrations.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE GREAT CHANGE OF HIS RELIGIOUS VIEWS.

“WITHIN a few months after my marriage,” my father proceeds, “I was led unexpectedly to exchange my curacy of Stoke for that of Ravenstone, the next village. This was done at the instance of the vicar of the latter place, the Rev. Mr. Chapman, an unmarried man, seventy years of age. He had hitherto kept no curate, but had occasionally applied to me for assistance: and now, as he wished to engage one, and I was at this time reputable, and not suspected of ‘methodism,’ he offered me his curacy, with a salary of 40*l.* a year; 15*l.* more than I received for Stoke. The reason of his change of plan was unknown to me at the time; but I afterwards found it to be a very considerable accession of fortune, which had come to him in rather a singular manner. A distant relation, a retail grocer in London, had, by saving habits, amassed about 12,000*l.* On the approach of death, he sent for Mr. Charles Higgins, (one of the Weston family, and afterwards Sheriff of London,) the head partner in the wholesale house with which he had dealt, and proposed to leave the whole to him. Mr. H., being a man of much generosity of mind, resolutely refused to accept it: and urged that it ought to go to the relations, however distant. The man, however, de-

clared that he would die intestate, if Mr. H. would not become his heir: and he kept his word. In consequence, after engaging in some litigation, and buying off some individuals who might have been troublesome, the vicar of Ravenstone, with his sister, a maiden lady, still more advanced in age, who lived with him, inherited the whole property. On the proposition which he made to me, all advance of salary at Stoke being declined, I became his curate."

My father removed to Ravenstone soon after Midsummer, 1775; but this was previously to his becoming curate of the parish.

"At this place," he says, "I resided about two years, and it proved, as it were, a *Bethel* to me. (Gen. xxviii.) Here I read the scriptures and prayed. Here I sought and, I trust, found, in a considerable measure, the knowledge of *the truth as it is in Jesus*. I was not indeed brought to say with unwavering voice, as Thomas did of old, *My Lord, and my God*; but I learned to *count all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ*. Here first I was made the instrument of bringing several persons earnestly to ask the all-important question, *What must I do to be saved?* and here I learned, in some degree, to give the scriptural answer, *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*"

Alluding to this period, he observed in a sermon preached at Aston, June 25, 1818, of which the Rev. Daniel Wilson has preserved and printed some memorandums: "It is above forty years since God of his mercy brought down my stubborn heart to true repentance. The first sermon I preached afterwards was from Gal. iii. 22, *But the scripture hath con-*

cluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. This very discourse was the means of bringing some of my people to feel their danger, and to come to me saying, *What shall I do to be saved?* when I hardly knew how to answer the question. Begin, my brethren, and continue in the same way. Show the people that they are *concluded under sin*. Tell them plainly of their lost condition. Till they feel this, nothing is done. Then exhibit to them *the promise by faith of Jesus Christ*: this will heal the broken heart."

He proceeds: "I did not however, in my own case, enter so deeply into the practical use of the truths to which I acceded, as might have been expected; but, in many things which I have since considered as wholly indefensible, I conformed to the world, and by so doing, was, in great measure, sheltered from scorn and reproach. But in these things the narrative in the Force of Truth, from April, 1775, to about the same period of 1777, must be referred to.

"Here likewise my two eldest children were born: Anne, who died at the age of four years and a half, and of whom further notice will be hereafter taken; and John, still living."

Soon after his removal to Ravenstone, we find him thus anticipating the death of another married sister.

"Though I was somewhat concerned for you, yet this was all absorbed in the concern I have always felt on my poor sister Gibbons's account, whenever I have thought of her since I received your letter. I can never reflect on her fate, and the cause of it,

without the most feeling anxiety. I have long thought of writing to her, but have been hindered by the supposition of my letter finding her departed from this troublesome scene. . . . May the Almighty supply her with a plentiful portion of his grace! . . . This most sincere and earnest prayer I do not fail daily to present at the throne of grace.”

Ravenstone, it may be observed, was always the favourite scene of my father's ministerial services. Here he enjoyed greater comfort, and here more visible success attended his pastoral labours, in proportion to the time of their continuance, than in any subsequent situation. “Here,” he says, in another part of the narrative, which may more conveniently be introduced in this place, “a considerable number of persons, who had previously been ignorant and careless about religion, became consistent and zealous Christians; and a general seriousness and attention were excited, beyond any thing which I have since witnessed.” This account, however, of his usefulness at Ravenstone, takes in not only the period of his residence there, but that also of his subsequent residence at Weston, till the year 1781, during which time he retained the curacy of Ravenstone.

The progress of his mind at the important period which has been mentioned, from the spring of the year 1775 to that of 1777, is so amply, and in so satisfactory a manner, detailed in the *Force of Truth*, that I should have contented myself, as he has done, with merely referring the reader to that work, were it not for the very interesting additional lights which his letters to his sisters, now in my hands, throw on certain principal points of the history. For the sake

of properly introducing them, I shall make some extracts from the work just mentioned.

“ It was at this time that my correspondence with Mr. Newton commenced. At a visitation, May, 1775, we exchanged a few words on a controverted subject, in the room among the clergy, which I believe drew many eyes upon us. At that time he prudently declined the discourse, but a day or two after he sent me a short note, with a little book for my perusal. This was the very thing I wanted, and I gladly embraced the opportunity, which, according to my wishes, seemed now to offer; God knoweth, with no inconsiderable expectations, that my arguments would prove irresistibly convincing, and that I should have the honour of rescuing a well-meaning person from his enthusiastical delusions. . . . I wrote him a long letter, purposing to draw from him such avowal and explanation of his sentiments, as might introduce a controversial discussion of our religious differences. The event by no means answered my expectation: he returned a very friendly and long answer to my letter; in which he carefully avoided the mention of those doctrines, which he knew would offend me: he declared, that he believed me to be one who feared God, and was under the teaching of his Holy Spirit: that he gladly accepted my offer of friendship, and was no ways inclined to dictate to me; but that, leaving me to the guidance of the Lord, he would be glad, as occasion served, from time to time, to bear testimony to the truths of the gospel, and to communicate his sentiments to me, on any subject, with all the confidence of friendship.

“ In this manner our correspondence began, and



it was continued, in the interchange of nine or ten letters, until December the same year. Throughout I held my purpose, and he his. I made use of every endeavour to draw him into controversy, and filled my letters with definitions, inquiries, arguments, objections, and consequences, requiring explicit answers. He, on the other hand, shunned every thing controversial, as much as possible, and filled his letters with the most useful, and least offensive instructions; except that now and then he dropped hints concerning the necessity, the true nature, and the efficacy of faith, and the manner in which it was to be sought, and obtained; and concerning some other matters, suited, as he judged, to help me forward in my inquiry after truth. But they very much offended my prejudices, afforded me matter of disputation, and at that time were of little use to me. . . . When I could not obtain my end, at my instance the correspondence was dropped; . . . and our acquaintance was, for a season, almost wholly broken off. For a long time we seldom met, and then only interchanged a few words on general topics of conversation. Yet he all along persevered in telling me, to my no small offence, that I should accede one day to his religious principles; that he had stood on my ground, and that I should stand on his: and he constantly informed his friends, that, though slowly, I was surely feeling my way to the knowledge of the truth. So clearly could he discern the dawnings of grace in my soul, amidst all the darkness of depraved nature, and my obstinate rebellion against the will of God.—This expectation was principally grounded on my conduct in the following circumstances. Imme-

diately after the commencement of our correspondence, in May, 1775, whilst my thoughts were much engrossed by some hopes of preferment; one Sunday, during the time of divine service, when the psalm was named, I opened the prayer book to turn to it: but (*accidentally* shall I say, or *providentially*?) I opened upon the Articles of Religion; and the eighth, respecting the authority and warrant of the Athanasian creed, immediately engaged my attention. My disbelief of the doctrine of a trinity of *coequal* persons in the unity of Godhead, and my pretensions to candour, both combined to excite my hatred to this creed: for which reasons, I had been accustomed to speak of it with contempt, and to neglect reading it officially. No sooner therefore did I read the words, ‘That it is to be thoroughly received, and believed; for that it may be proved by most certain warrants of holy scripture;’ than my mind was greatly impressed and affected. The matter of subscription immediately occurred to my thoughts, and from that moment I conceived such scruples about it, that, till my view of the whole system of Christianity was entirely changed, they remained insuperable. . . . At length, after a violent conflict between interest and conscience, I made known to my patron my scruples, and my determination not to subscribe. Thus my views of preferment were deliberately given up, and with an increasing family I was left, as far as mere human prudence could discern, with little other prospect than that of poverty and distress. My objections to the Articles were, as I now see, groundless; much self-sufficiency, undue warmth of temper, and obstinacy,

were betrayed in the management of this affair, for which I ought to be humbled. But my adherence to the dictates of my conscience, and holding fast my integrity in such trying circumstances, I never did, and, I trust, never shall repent.”

Letters written in the crisis of such a conflict, which is known to have had such an issue, and laying open the whole soul of the writer, cannot fail to interest any one, who takes pleasure in studying the workings of the human mind, and the operations of divine grace upon the heart. And such are the letters which I now proceed to lay before the reader: only premising, that Mr. Newton's correspondence with my father commences with this very question of subscription, and that, from a passage in the manuscript of his first letter, omitted in the printed copies, it appears, that my father had informed him of his having published, or at least transmitted for publication, the paper which will be found here referred to.

The following is an extract of a letter from my father to his eldest sister dated at Stoke, July 12, 1775—in the interval between Mr. N.'s first and second letters to him.

“ Both from information of what passes around me and my own experience, I am convinced that this is a fluctuating scene of restless agitation; and that the only way to enjoy any tolerable degree of comfort, is by a constant endeavour to keep *a conscience void of offence*, and to attain to something of an indifference in regard to this world, fully trusting in God, that he will make all things work together for good to them that fear him, and endeavour before all things to obey

him. . . . As this is written *to* one that knows what trouble is, . . . so is it written *by* one, who, among blessings which he has received from the God of goodness, has also experienced troubles, and does so yet; and is now more likely than ever to meet with trials, more than in general fall to the share of man. . . . We should learn to place a more firm and steady dependence on the wisdom and goodness of our heavenly friend and father, and more firmly to believe those promises he has made us; so as not to be driven from our confidence in the day of trial and gloomy disappointment, being assured that he will never forsake us, if we forsake not him. . . . As Christians we should remember that troubles are the touchstones of our faith, patience, meekness, and resignation; and, if well supported, will *work for us a more exceeding weight of glory*. . . .

“ I now turn to my own affairs. I had rather not speak concerning them but for two reasons: first, lest you should hear of them from others; and, second, lest you should think I had not that confidence in you that I have in others. I know I cannot speak of them without saying a great deal, and perhaps at last without saying so much as to excuse me in your mind from censure.—I have had too ambitious and interested views; and have placed my expectations and desires too much on the emoluments of the ministry, and too little on the labours. In my studies and schemes I have more anxiously consulted by what means I might advance myself, than how I might make myself useful as a minister of the gospel. But it has pleased providence, that, by means of those very studies on which I founded my hopes of advance,

ment, but which have been carried on in a direction very different from what I intended, I have arrived at a disposition of heart, and a train of thinking, which are totally incompatible with all my hopes of preferment. In one word, I have discovered the importance of that trust which is committed to me; what is the extent of that duty it requires; and how it ought to be performed: and I find it something inconceivably different from what one would suppose it to be, from the too general, and well nigh universal conduct of those to whom it is committed. I have also discovered what true unadulterated Christianity is, and find it not exactly what even *our* creeds and articles represent it. I have arrived, in point of conscience, at perhaps an unnecessary scrupulousness; insomuch that I cannot, either through hopes of gain and favour, or through fear of loss and censure, do a thing that my heart disapproves. I have arrived at a critical nicety in examining and weighing expressions, and comparing one thing with another, which I endeavoured to attain as a step to advancement; but the supreme Director has turned it into an insurmountable obstacle. Within sight, as it were, of preferment, I have met with what has put a period to my present expectations, and has caused me formally to renounce them.”—He then states his disapprobation of many things in the Articles, and particularly his utter repugnance to the Athanasian creed, both its doctrine and its damnatory clauses; and then proceeds: “This is the trial that is now upon me. If by subscription be meant an avowed assent to the truth of every proposition contained in what we subscribe, I can never subscribe

these Articles, without telling a most audacious lie in the face of God, in a solemn and important matter of religion, for the sake of sordid lucre. Such a lie would wound my conscience, and forfeit His favour, *in whose favour is life*: and riches would make me but a poor amends. On the other hand, if I resolve not to subscribe, I must at present renounce all my aspiring hopes, and be content to be a poor, and perhaps despised, curate, and censured into the bargain. But yet this is the far better side of the question; for God has promised, and I dare believe, that he that *seeketh the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, shall be supplied with what He sees that he wants: that he, who leaves any worldly treasure *for his sake and the gospel's*, shall be amply rewarded even in this life: and that him, who is *not ashamed of Christ, and of his words*, he will not be ashamed to own; and the contrary. I have therefore chosen this side of the question, and hope by God's assistance to persevere therein.—But, should preferment be offered, I shall venture to ask, whether the above be the right definition of subscription or not. If they mean any thing else, and will say so—I mean, that a man may subscribe without believing every part—I then could subscribe. It is true, subscription would be then a farce: but that is their business.... But, by the unaccountable conduct of Mr. W., the affair is noised so much abroad, that I do not suppose I shall ever have an offer: nor do I desire it. I am at present very composed, and resigned to my disappointment; and only wish for a rather better curacy, in a parish where I could live, and spend my whole time in the duties of my function. At first I was sadly

agitated, which was increased by the warm censures I received. In addition to other things, I fear I have in part lost Mr. W.'s favour. But that God in whom I trust, and in obedience to whom I act, can raise me up another and better friend. He has supported me hitherto, and has brought my mind to a dependence on him: and I do not fear that he will leave me destitute. . . . I have but 80*l.* a year in all, (including payment for the tuition of Master Wrighte,) and it is not very improbable that I may get a curacy of that value alone, as I do not mind what confinement it brings, nor how much work I do. . . . Besides, I deem it my duty (could I do it,) to confine myself entirely to my office as a minister, which, whatever people may think, is employment sufficient for any man, when it is duly discharged."

The following is to his younger sister, (afterwards Mrs. Ford,) dated the next day, July 13, 1775.

"Dear sister, Amidst a hurry of concerns, I undertake to write an answer to your kind letter: but can never answer it in any thing of a correct manner, as my head is full of thoughts, and my heart of cares. As to the affair which engrossed my last, I can say but little, lest I should again fill my sheet about it. Every day more firmly convinces me, that my cause is the cause of truth, and makes me more resolved to adhere to it at all adventures, confiding in God Almighty for support and assistance. I mean, that I will never purchase preferment at the price of subscription—if by subscription be meant an avowed assent to the truth of every proposition contained in the thirty-nine Articles. If those who require sub-

scription will put any more favourable construction upon it, that may alter the case.

“ Since I wrote my last, I have had severe trials, of which I must give a brief account. I wrote a letter with the intention to publish it, which I resolved first to show Mrs. W., as I thought it was using Mr. W. ill, if I did not make known my resolution to him, that he might not trouble himself further on my account. Accordingly I did let her see it: and the consequence was, that for several days I was almost baited out of my life. All manner of accusations were heaped upon me: vanity, hypocrisy, obstinacy, &c. I was tempted on one hand with hopes, and alarmed on the other with fears. Even *starving* was mentioned. But such arguments were made use of, as showed me the weakness of the cause that needed them. Conscience, religion, providence, a future scene were all made a mere jest of. But I was bold, and did not betray the cause of God and religion, but preached them some such sermons, (I mean in conversation,) as they never had before heard, I think. However, the letter was sent, but not published; which I cannot account for, as I desired the printer to send it back if he did not choose to publish it. But, strange to tell, these very persons who opposed my publishing—which among bad consequences might have produced good ones, (as every body allowed the letter to be unanswerable, and, at the same time, modest and decent, and such as would in some measure apologise for itself,)—these very persons spread the report all over the country, so that no one can be ignorant of my sentiments and resolutions; yet none has the opportunity of seeing



the reasons, on which they are grounded, fairly stated. At the same time I gave considerable offence by my endeavours to preserve a degree of authority over my pupil; which occasioned some disagreeable circumstances.—These censures, added to the trial of relinquishing all my fond hopes, and renouncing my worldly interests, and aggravated by all the terrors, by which, in the day of trial, every thing is magnified, were well nigh more than I could bear. But by God Almighty's assistance, to whom I applied for direction and support, in a manner that, I hope, was acceptable through his mercy, I soon composed my agitated mind, and reduced it into a state of resigned acquiescence in his will, and trust in his promises. . . . In adherence to the cause which I think good, I am ready to resign all my worldly expectations, and to sell all that I have, take up my cross, and follow my Lord and Master. To this state of calm composure I arrived chiefly by reading the Gospels, and supposing the promises therein contained addressed to me by divine veracity: and I have by that means, joined with prayer to God for direction and assistance, arrived at that state of mind as to be ready to give up all my aspiring thoughts, and to content myself to serve God in the humble condition of a curate, if such be his will: though I cannot, nor can all the world, exclude me so effectually from preferment, but that God can give it me, if he sees good. This advantage I have most certainly reaped from it, that it has caused me more carefully to examine the holy scriptures, and to turn my thoughts more to these subjects, and to the consideration of that important trust, which is committed to me, and

how I may discharge it, so as, while I preach to others, I may not be *myself a castaway*. This has been a most valuable acquisition, as I was before too apt to judge by comparison, and to think I did enough if I did rather more than others: but now I find, that, as I have been solemnly dedicated to the service of God and religion, I can never do enough, so long as I leave any thing undone, which it was in my power to do, towards the growth of religious knowledge and virtuous practice. I have found that those, who enter the ministry for the sake of the riches, and honours, and indulgences thereby to be obtained, are guilty of a most aggravated crime: and that a zeal for the propagation of the gospel and the salvation of souls; a willingness to undertake *any* labours, and an alacrity in undergoing them; a ready submission to inconvenience, and a constancy amidst difficulties; being capable even of bearing contempt and censure, or poverty, when laid in the way of our duty; a warm benevolence; and that kind of humility, which can condescend to the meanest offices for the sake of doing good; are the indispensable dispositions for a faithful minister of the gospel. We are *to live at the altar*: but a *living*, a bare decent maintenance, without any avaricious or ambitious views of advancing ourselves or our families, or hankering after indulgences, should content us. We are required to set an example of moderation, and trust in God and his promises; of heavenly mindedness; laying up our treasures in heaven; setting our affections on things above; having food and raiment being therewith content; in order that, with the greater advantage, we may, as we are in duty

bound, inculcate these things on our flocks:—all this I have learned, or confirmed to myself, and have, by God's grace, fixed my resolution to endeavour to attain. And, being assured that, if I do so, he will never leave me destitute, I am perfectly contented, as far as relates to this affair, only desiring that I may be able to persevere in my duty, and, with an entire dependence, leaving the further disposal of my concerns to God."

My last extract is from a letter to Mrs. Webster, dated Ravenstone, October 15, 1775. "In what you say of my religious scruples, you seem in several errors concerning me and my conduct, which I must endeavour to rectify. You seem afraid that I should lose all this world's goods. Remember our Saviour's words, *Whosoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*: that is, if he be not ready to forsake all that he hath, when his duty requires it. Not that I have any reason to apprehend I am likely to be put to that severe trial. Thanks to the Almighty, my circumstances mend, my friends multiply, and I have reason to think that my reputation, as a faithful minister, increases rather than diminishes,—if one may judge by external respect, civilities, and favours. Not that I am so far ruled in my opinion of myself by what others judge of me, as to be reconciled to my faults because they are willing to pardon them. My conscience must be my judge in this world, and my Saviour in the next: and to them I appeal for the rectitude of my intentions. But even were I to be put to the trial of losing all my worldly goods, let me ask you, would you have me follow the example of the young man in the gospel,

who, sorrowing, left Christ rather than part with his large possessions? What think you of what our Lord says, *But seek ye FIRST the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you?* Dare you believe this promise or not? I DARE: and will act accordingly, by God's assistance. As to what you argue of my family, &c. I will take every honest precaution to provide for them: and I dare confidently submit the event to God, without once distrusting his veracity and goodness. Nor will I ever violate my conscience to provide for my family: at least I hope I never shall. . . . Were I in your condition, as a private Christian, the subjects of my scruples would give me no concern: and I join in the whole liturgy of the church, some very few things excepted, with the highest satisfaction.—As to my preaching, I neither preach for or against any human inventions. The word of God is my subject, and my rule; and my preaching, I may venture to say, is more calculated to satisfy than to raise doubts and scruples. Without preferment I may live, and live comfortably and happily: but without a clear conscience I cannot. I am a minister of the church of England, and hope to continue so, as I prefer her liturgy, her discipline, and her doctrine, to that of any other society of Christians in the universe: and if, by subscribing her Articles, they will declare they mean no more than such a preference, I will subscribe: but, if they mean by subscription an implicit belief of all their doctrines, it is a price I will not pay for preferment. . . . Mr. Lindsay I think in many dangerous errors, and I am sorry my father has got his book.”

All this appears to me to present as fine an exhibition, in proportion to the stage on which it was passing, as can, perhaps, be pointed out since the days of Luther, of a man resolutely taking the right side in a severe case of that conflict, which is continually, in one form or other, carrying on in the world, between conscience and present interest; and in which so few are proof against the various assaults that temptation makes upon them. These letters demonstrate that, though the writer was yet far from having obtained just views of Christian doctrines; even of those doctrines which are most essential to the formation of the Christian spirit and character; he yet had received that great principle of “obedience to the faith,” which was sure, under the divine blessing, ultimately to bring him right; to lead him to the reception of every truth, and to submission to every duty, as they might be successively brought home to his conviction. Indeed almost all the great lineaments of my father’s subsequent character are here presented to us in embryo, or indeed in a stage of considerable development:—his decision and boldness—his inflexible integrity—his acknowledgment of God in all his ways—his firm faith in His word, and His providence—his superiority to the world—his exalted views of the service which Christ requires of us, especially in the sacred ministry;—views, be it observed, which, however familiar they may be to any of us, open upon him with all the air and impression of a new discovery. Let a few sentences be recalled to the reader’s notice:—“It has pleased Providence, that, by means of those very studies, on which I founded my hopes of advancement, I have arrived at what is totally incompatible

with it. The supreme Director has turned it into an insurmountable obstacle.—This is the far better side of the question”—namely, poverty, contempt, censure, with a good conscience.—“ I have chosen this side, and hope by God’s assistance to persevere therein.—I will never violate my conscience to provide for my family; at least, I hope I never shall.—Without preferment I may live, and live happily; but without a clear conscience I cannot.—I was bold, and did not betray the cause of God.—Would you have me follow the example of the young man in the gospel?—God hath promised and I dare believe him.—Dare you believe his promise? I dare: and by his assistance will act accordingly.—I do not fear that he will leave me destitute.—By reading the gospels, with prayer to God, I have arrived at that state of mind, as to be ready to resign all my worldly expectations, and to sell all that I have, take up my cross, and follow my Lord and Master.—I have discovered the importance of that trust which is committed to me; what is the extent of that duty it requires; and how it ought to be performed: and I find it inconceivably different from what is generally supposed.—I was apt to judge by comparison, and to think I did enough if I did rather more than others: but now I find that, as I have been solemnly dedicated to the service of God and religion, I can never do enough, so long as I leave any thing undone, which it was in my power to do, towards the growth of religious knowledge and virtuous practice.—We are to live at the altar: but a living, a bare decent maintenance, without any avaricious or ambitious views of advancing ourselves or our families, or hankering after indulgences, should

content us.”—I must be pardoned if I cannot contemplate with mere calm approbation sentences like these, not artfully arranged

‘ to serve an occasion,’

but whispered, in sincerity of heart, where, as we have already seen, they were not likely to be received with approbation, and where there was no prospect of their ever emerging to public notice:—sentences, too, accompanied with unquestionable marks of sobriety of mind and deliberate judgment; expressive of a severe sacrifice then actually taking place; and conveying sentiments which, after some further fluctuations and delays, governed the whole future life of their author. Surely there is something in them which bespeaks even the Christian hero. The *occasion*, indeed, which first called these principles into action, was, as he soon afterwards found, a fundamental misconception of Christian truths; but the principles themselves were noble.—From my father’s conduct at this crisis, Mr. Newton augured well of him: but it would be a very small part of what is now before us, that could be submitted to Mr. N.’s observation. Had he known all that passed, he might well have anticipated all that followed.

The comparative poverty in which my father spent his days has been lamented: and on some grounds it might justly be so: but, had his lot been materially different, is it not manifest that sentiments like the above, which pervade his future writings, would in his mouth have lost more than half their force?

One further remark suggests itself. No one I should conceive can doubt, especially when these letters are viewed in connection with what subsequently

took place, that the writer of them was, at the time, praying to God in an acceptable manner, as well as profitably reading the scriptures. The right use of prayer—making God our refuge in time of need—is apparent in them; and the genuine effect of true prayer follows, which is composure of mind in committing events to God, while we keep the path of duty. And this falls in with a persuasion which my father always entertained, and which has in effect been already quoted from the Force of Truth, that he prayed spiritually, and consequently with acceptance, even while, to a considerable degree, involved in Socinian errors. No doubt, in such a case, he was assisted by a Spirit which he did not confess, and accepted through a Mediator, of whom, as yet, he had little *explicit* knowledge. But then, let it be observed, he was at this time no stationary and self-satisfied Socinian: he was now a sincere and earnest inquirer after truth: he desired “to know,” in order that he might “do, the will of God:” he had already received that impulse, which was ere long to carry him far off from the Socinian ground. And accordingly the very next paragraph, in the Force of Truth, to those which are quoted as an introduction to the above letters, informs us, that the result of his great mental conflict was, to bring him “to this important determination: not so to believe what any man said, as to take it upon his authority; but to search the word of God with this single intention, to discover whether the Articles of the Church of England, in general, and the Athanasian creed in particular, were or were not agreeable to the scriptures.” And hence may be dated that deep practical study of the oracles of God,



with constant earnest prayer for divine teaching; and that entire change of sentiments and of character, resulting from it; which the Force of Truth describes. —I cherish, not with a superstitious, yet certainly with a degree of reverent and grateful regard, a fragment of that Greek Testament in which, in the course of these inquiries, my father read and deeply meditated upon every part of that volume of divine revelation; spending usually, as I have heard him say, during that one perusal, three hours upon every chapter: frequently, when the weather would permit, passing this time in the park of Weston Underwood, which has been subsequently immortalized by the writings of Cowper.

Before we resume the narrative, I shall here introduce one more extract of a letter, showing his views of some important doctrinal points. Though it appears from the Force of Truth, that he was not established in the orthodox faith concerning the Trinity till the latter part of the year 1777, yet he wrote as follows upon some topics, apparently connected with it, as early as December 30, 1775. “ I think my father’s books lead him into errors of considerable consequence: but, though I wish, and pray to God to set him right, yet I seem very unwilling to offer myself as an instrument. The error I mean in chief is, the supposition that man wanted an *instructor*, more than a *Saviour*: or, in other words, that the *merits* of Christ were not so necessary to obtain remission of sins, as his *instruction* was to teach us the way of righteousness. But this is contrary to scripture. Man, every man, is there represented as a sinner, as in bondage to sin and the devil,

and as wanting *redemption* from them; as liable to punishment, and wanting *salvation* from it; as weak and frail, and wanting the divine *assistance*. For all these purposes Jesus came. He is therefore our Redeemer, our Saviour, as well as our Instructor; and on him, by faith, we should rely for forgiveness, for effectual assistance in obeying his precepts, and for the acceptance of our imperfect obedience."

We now return to his narrative. "During part of the time that I resided at Ravenstone, I daily attended Mr. Wrighte's son: but, in proportion as I became more decidedly attentive to religion, my company was less agreeable; and, some difference arising about the management of an indulged child, I was dismissed from this employment. For some time afterwards, I lived on terms of civility with the family: but, on my decidedly adopting and avowing my present religious sentiments, this connexion was, as nearly as possible, dissolved. Thus all my flattering prospects from that quarter terminated. *But it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in princes.*"—The young man, who had been my father's pupil, lost his life about the time that he came of age, in a melancholy manner, on which occasion, my father says, "I wrote to Mr. W. in the most consoling, sympathizing style I possibly could, introducing a few intimations of a religious nature; hoping that on so pathetic an occasion his answer might have made way for something further: but no answer was returned."

He proceeds: "Some part of that time also, I had two young relations from London under my care. I succeeded sufficiently well in bringing them forward in their studies, but I failed of gaining their attach-

ment; and I became convinced that I did not possess that patience, meekness, and self-command, which the instruction of youth, especially of indulged children, requires: and, having learned, probably better than I had any other good lesson, to trust in the providence of God for temporal subsistence, while I attended to the duties of my station; and, finding that I had, in my peculiar circumstances, quite sufficient employment, in *learning* and *teaching* religion; I deliberately gave up this part of my plan, resolving to undertake nothing more in the way of tuition, at least for the present. This being determined, I solemnly vowed before God, never more to engage in any pursuit, study, or publication, which should not be evidently subservient to my ministerial usefulness, or, generally, to the propagation of genuine Christianity. In some respects, perhaps, my notions on these subjects were too contracted: but I rejoice, and am thankful, that I have hitherto performed this vow."

On this subject the following paragraph occurs in the Force of Truth. "About this time," the latter part of the year 1776, "after many delays, I complied with the admonitions of my conscience, and disengaged myself from all other employments, with a solemn resolution to leave all my temporal concerns in the hands of the Lord, and entirely to devote myself to the work of the ministry. Being thus become master of all my time, I dropped every other study, and turned the whole current of my reflections and inquiries into another channel; and for several years I scarcely opened a book which treated of any thing besides religion."

The purpose here described, so solemnly formed,

so faithfully kept, and eventually productive of such important results, must certainly be noticed as a very observable point in my father's history. The proceeding was still characteristic; showing his usual determination of mind. Circumstances also, as he implies, might peculiarly call for it in his case: and, now that we have seen the event, we cannot help regarding it, as one of those steps which was to lead to the accomplishment of the special work, that divine providence designed him to perform. Considering likewise the ambitious views which had influenced his entering into orders, and many of his subsequent exertions, and the deliberate sacrifice of those views which was made by the resolution now before us, we can hardly avoid looking upon it, as marking a mind just arrived at that point of its Christian progress, at which, "after many delays," many hesitations, and misgivings, and conflicts, and fears perhaps for the consequences, it is at length brought "to count all but loss for Christ,"—"finds the pearl of great price, and goes and sells all that it may buy it."

Independently, however, of any thing peculiar to the present case, is not one compelled to exclaim, Blessed is that servant, called by his Lord to the work of the ministry, who thus "gives himself wholly thereto!"<sup>1</sup> *His* "profiting shall be known unto all men;" *his* "labour shall not be in vain in the Lord:" *he* shall be "blessed in his deed." Alas! in this especially we fail, I fear, of imitating the primitive ministers of the gospel. And are not we, of the present generation, here in danger of falling short of our fathers; of men who have been called to their re-

<sup>1</sup> Ἐν ταύταις ἰσθί. 1 Tim. iv. 15.

ward even in our own time? Are we not often distracted by various studies, various pursuits, which pertain to the present life, instead of wholly given to the work of the Lord? Is it not from this, among other causes, that we are so liable to be ministers, indeed, in the pulpit, but, at the best, only ordinary Christians every where else? <sup>1</sup>

While I venture to suggest these inquiries, prompted, alas! in great measure by my own feelings, and my own consciousness, I would not forget the limitation which the subject of these memoirs himself puts upon what has given occasion to them. He observes, “In some respects, perhaps, my notions on these subjects were (then) too contracted.” And accordingly I would add, that though, “for several years he scarcely opened a book which treated of any thing besides religion,” this by no means continued to be the case, when his mind was made up, and well stored with information, upon theological questions. On the contrary, his reading then became as various as he had the opportunity of making it. No book, which furnished knowledge that might be turned to account, was uninteresting to him.<sup>2</sup> It was his sentiment, that every student should be as excursive in his researches, as his particular calling would permit

<sup>1</sup> See the admirable remarks on the Christian Ministry in Mr. Cecil's Remains.

<sup>2</sup> As examples I would mention, that, when Mr. H. Thornton's work on Paper Credit came out he read it repeatedly with great satisfaction; having in some measure been prepared for the subject by his former study of Locke's Treatises on Money, &c. At a much later period also he felt himself deeply interested in reading the Greek tragedians, and other classic authors with his pupils.

him to be; but that every one should have, so to speak, "a hive" to which to bring home his collected stores; should make all his acquisitions bear upon some useful object. So far from undervaluing solid learning of any kind, he esteemed it more and more highly, to the end of life; and earnestly pressed young men to acquire it, that they might consecrate it to the service of God. He longed to see other branches of literature rendered subservient to religion; and thought that, while too much, perhaps, was published directly upon theological subjects, there was a lamentable deficiency of literary works conducted upon sound Christian principles.

I may here introduce another remarkable letter, showing the progress of his doctrinal views at this time. It is addressed to his younger sister, and dated December 30, 1776. I should have supposed it written after he had become acquainted with Hooker's works, had he not in the *Force of Truth* so expressly referred his introduction to that great writer to the following month, January 1777. One expression in the letter certainly seems to imply that he had met with, at least, an important quotation from Hooker.—It should be borne in mind, that in this and other letters, when he uses the term *methodist*, it is with the same limitation as in the *Force of Truth*: it means neither the followers of Mr. Wesley, nor of Mr. Whitefield, to whom it was first applied, and by whom it has been more or less recognized; but chiefly those persons, within the pale of the established church, who have incurred it, as a term of reproach, by a close adherence to the real doctrines (as they apprehend them to be,) of the Reforma-

tion, and a conduct corresponding with their principles.<sup>1</sup> The letter is as follows:

“ I told my brother I would give him my sentiments on some subjects he mentioned, in my letter to you. The first was the Methodists. And here I shall not begin to rail at them, or condemn them, and their doctrines and principles altogether: nor yet shall I acquit, or extol them, in the gross. Their doctrines are the doctrines of scripture, by the help of a warm imagination, run into extremes; which, pushed forward by the same helps, may be *represented* as little better than madness, and as destructive of all practical religion. Their doctrines are, 1. Justification by faith alone: and in this matter they are evidently in the right, as every man who reads the scripture must see. The doctrine, as I view it, stands thus: All men are actual sinners: No sinner can justify himself before God: If then he be justified, it cannot be by his own works, but by God’s mercy and favour: And this mercy and favour are given to none but believers. At the same time, even our best performances have so much of imperfection in them, our fruit of holiness is so unsound,<sup>2</sup> that, before a holy God, even our best actions cannot justify themselves; much less atone for our manifold sins, or deserve any reward, or an eternal reward. Therefore our justification is not, in any sense or degree, attributed to our works, because they have no inherent merit, or acceptableness, in them, save as God doth mercifully condescend to accept them at the hands of

<sup>1</sup> See note at the end of the first part of the Force of Truth.

<sup>2</sup> “ The little fruit which we have in holiness, it is, God knoweth, corrupt and unsound.” *Hooker*, of Justification.

believers. Therefore we are justified before God by faith: but then it is *such* a faith as worketh by love, love of God and man; bringeth the believer under the influence of the Holy Spirit: and the fruit of that Spirit is *in all goodness and righteousness, and truth*. If faith do not this, it is so far from justifying any person, that it cannot justify itself: it is dead, inactive, unfruitful. Thus the necessity of good works is effectually secured: for without them there is no justification. And yet we are not justified by them, but by that faith which produces them. Read St. Paul's epistles, and St. James's, carefully, without any comment, and object to the doctrine if you can. The methodists therefore are to blame in this alone, that they do not guard their doctrine as St. Paul has done, but use such expressions in discoursing of it, as may be interpreted so as utterly to destroy all good and evil; and dwell on these passages in such wise, as to neglect and undervalue those other passages which so plainly declare, that the design of the gospel is, to make us holy here, that we may be capable of being happy hereafter. See Tit. ii. 11, &c.—But then the ministers of other principles are at least equally to blame for so much neglecting to study the scriptures, and to explain these doctrines in their true sense; thereby giving injudicious people an occasion of perverting them. In short, we are to be justified by our faith, which alone can render sinners partakers of the grace and mercy of the gospel: at the same time, we and our faith also must be judged according to our works: and, if our faith have not produced the fruits of righteousness, it will be condemned as dead and unfruitful.



and we both as sinners and unbelievers.—2. The methodists preach the imputed righteousness of Christ: which too is a scripture doctrine, as I think. *Christ became sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,* says St. Paul. But I will leave you to examine it, unless you desire me to be more full, and only lay down my system of it. We all by nature had interest in Adam, and were condemned in or by his condemnation, for his disobedience, unto temporal death. (This certainly we all suffered on account of Adam's sin, who thereby became mortal, and propagated a mortal progeny; though all other consequences were best attributed to each person's actual transgressions.) Even so, being by faith united unto him, as branches of the true vine, we all may spiritually have interest in Christ, and be justified in his justification, for his perfect obedience unto eternal life. See Rom. v, vi. I am persuaded, if you carefully examine, you will find this not only St. Paul's doctrine, but, in general, the doctrine of the New Testament. The only fault the methodists commit is in laying so much stress on this, as to derogate from the necessity of personal righteousness, or holiness. And here indeed they are very unscriptural; for nothing can be plainer than that, if any man be by faith united unto Christ, that union will assuredly make him bring forth much fruit: (see John xv.) and that nothing can more effectually dissolve that mystical union than a wicked and immoral life.—

3. The methodists attribute all to the grace of God's Holy Spirit, even faith itself: and so do the scriptures. And yet in this they are more exceptionable

than in any other point; because they thereby totally and avowedly overthrow our agency, and turn us into machines, and render God a respecter of persons, and indeed what I do not choose to say.<sup>1</sup> In short, to every Christian God hath promised his Holy Spirit, if he sues for it, and he is more ready to give than we to pray; and doth, in the sinner's conversion, *prevent* his prayers: but we may resist, grieve, quench, do despite unto this Holy Spirit. . . . I say nothing of their notions of election, predestination, assurance of the elect, and others, which are all implied, as far as doctrinal,<sup>2</sup> in what I have said; though as mere speculative notions they are not; and are too abstruse, and unimportant, and perplexing, to be worth treating of.—The doctrines of regeneration, or the new birth, and original sin, and free grace, are all more or less scriptural; but under such interpreters are generally carried much beyond the truth, and degenerate into fanaticism, and partake of their other notions. . . .”

The birth of my father's two eldest children, at Ravenstone, has been already mentioned. Perhaps I shall be excused, if, for the sake of introducing a characteristic paragraph, I bring myself a little more distinctly into notice. The next letter to his sister, dated April 15, 1777, announces my birth, and contains the following passage:

“As to my boy, he is already dedicated to the mi-

<sup>1</sup> It need not be said what his own subsequent opinion was of these charges. They fall under the censure implied in the first sentence of this letter, concerning the doctrines of “the methodists.”

<sup>2</sup> Query: *practical?*

nistry, if it please God to spare his life, and mine, and to give him a head and heart meet for so sacred and important a function. Should he be defective in either one or the other, he shall be any thing or nothing rather than that. Bad ministers we have enough, and much more than enough: but good ones are a sort of black swans, mighty great rarities.—It was with this intent that I wished the child to be a boy; and with this intent I shall, God willing, always educate him: and, if he lives to be a pious, faithful, able, and useful minister of the gospel, I ask no higher preferment for him, than I now have myself: so contented am I with my own lot, and so totally indifferent about these lesser matters.”

“At this time,” my father proceeds in his memoir, “I had not the most distant prospect of preferment; my expectation of adding to my scanty income by pupils was terminated; and, considering the character of my vicar, and the determined opposition of my former rector, I had little prospect of retaining my curacy. Yet, with an increasing family, I seldom felt any anxiety about a provision: and my wife, who had married with different prospects, fully concurred with me. She would say, ‘Only act according to the dictates of your conscience; we shall doubtless be provided for:’ yet, when she saw, as she frequently did, that my eager spirit and violent temper were hurrying me into wrong measures, she uniformly checked me: and, though often not till after much opposition on my part, she always carried her point with me; to my unspeakable benefit.

“After I had written my sermons for the Sunday, I, for a long time, constantly read them to her before

they were preached: and, at her instance, I altered many things, especially in exchanging words, unintelligible to labourers and lace-makers, for simpler language. This induced a habit of familiar speaking in the pulpit, which has since been censured, probably with justice, as too colloquial."

It may here be added, that my father's practice of extemporary preaching commenced from these private rehearsals of his sermons before they were preached. Something had occurred in the parish to which he thought it right to allude in the pulpit: but, on his reciting to my mother the discourse which he had prepared, she objected to it, and brought him over to her opinion. He in consequence committed his sermon to the flames, and was thus, on the Saturday evening, left without one for the next day. This induced him to address his congregation without written preparation; and, succeeding in the attempt, he repeated it, and by degrees discontinued the use of written sermons. This change, however, was not made without severe effort. An old parishioner at Weston (lately deceased,) mentioned well remembering his sitting down in a kind of despair, and exclaiming, 'It does not signify, it is impossible that I should ever be able to preach extempore.'

## CHAPTER V.

### PERIOD AT WESTON UNDERWOOD TILL THE PUBLICATION OF THE FORCE OF TRUTH.

“ IN the spring, 1777, I removed to Weston Underwood, to a house afterwards well known, under the name of the Lodge, as the residence of the poet Cowper. The ground intended for the garden, when I came to it, more resembled a stonequarry: but by my personal labour it was brought into order, and several fine fruit trees, now growing in it, were of my planting.

“ In August following my father died. He seemed to be well satisfied at my becoming a clergyman: but my new views of the doctrines of Christianity did not meet his approbation. In answer to what I had written on this subject, I received a letter very hostile to my sentiments, and full of Socinian principles. This greatly affected me, and I wrote an answer with many tears and prayers: but he never saw it, as he was dying when it arrived. On receiving information of his sickness, I set off immediately to visit him, but I did not reach his house (distant more than a hundred miles,) till after his funeral.

“ Every circumstance, on this mournful occasion, concurred to depress my spirits; and I appeared so dejected and melancholy among my relations, and my former neighbours, who had always before been pleased with my cheerfulness, (though alas! it was

in great measure assumed and affected,) that my religious principles bore the blame, and their prejudices against them were much increased.”

In a letter dated April 15th of this year, he had thus adverted to his father's religious sentiments. “ I am grieved whenever I think of some notions my father used to hold, which are so directly contrary to true Christian doctrine, and grounded on self-dependence, which most assuredly is destructive of the whole scheme of justification through Christ. He has given me permission to write on these subjects; and I have written several letters already, which must I think convince him, that man has no ground to hope for acceptance with God on his own account, or through his own poor deservings. It is amazing to consider what havoc this self-dependence makes among the Christian duties. Gratitude for abundant mercies received, and praise and thanksgiving in consequence; prayer to God for forgiveness, for assistance, and for acceptance; in short, every part of piety and the love of God suffers exceedingly from these notions: and so doth humility, which is of all others the most needful to our acceptance with God, who *resisteth the proud, and giveth his grace unto the humble.* Indeed I cannot conceive that a man can become a Christian, who does not feel that he is a poor lost sinner, that has no hope but from God's mercy in Christ. My brother, I am of opinion, disapproves this way of writing: but I do it, I am sure, from the best of motives, and I would rather convince my father of his errors in this respect, than acquire a very large sum of money—aye, than obtain any worldly advantage whatsoever.”

In the same letter he thus notices his approaching removal to Weston: “ I have scarcely room to tell you, that we are to remove to Weston, to a fine house, fit for a squire, and other people are to pay the rent. This (obtaining of a house at Weston) I heartily thank God for, as I am placed in a neighbourhood where every body vies in kindness to me; and where I have the pleasing prospect of doing much good. Assure yourself, dear sister, that God will raise up friends, and provide for all who trust in him, and serve him.”

The death of his mother took place the 28th of October following. The event appears to have come upon him unexpectedly. He was to have received a visit from her, which he had hoped might promote her spiritual interests, but she was not able to undertake the journey; and it seems not to have been till the 29th of October, (the day after her decease,) that he was apprized of her danger, or had the opportunity of writing to her on the subject. In a letter to his elder sister of that date, enclosing one to his mother, he says: “ God knows my heart, I have no sentiments respecting either you or her, or any of the family, but those of love and affection, and am exceedingly sorry that my undesigned negligence” (he had written a letter which had slipped behind his bureau, and was never sent,) “ should cause any uneasiness to one, to whom I wish most sincerely every possible good, and whom I most heartily pray to God to bless with every blessing here and hereafter. . . . Though I sincerely wish every branch of the family may contend, who shall show our common and only remaining parent the most tenderness and

attention, yet I would not have it such a contest as to disturb, in the least, that mutual love and harmony, which I wish, and shall ever endeavour to preserve amongst ourselves.”

About the time of my father's removal to Weston, his intercourse with Mr. Newton, which had been almost wholly broken off since the termination of their correspondence in December 1775, was renewed. “Under discouraging circumstances,” he tells us in the Force of Truth, he “had occasion to call upon Mr. N., and was so comforted and edified by his discourse, that his heart, being by this means relieved of its burden, became susceptible of affection for him. From that time,” he says, “I was inwardly pleased to have him for my friend; though not, as now, rejoiced to *call* him so.”

The narrative proceeds: “About 170*l.* eventually came to me by my father's death; which, by annual small deductions beyond the interest, was gradually exhausted. I had indeed, at that time, to struggle with many difficulties; but I met with unexpected helps, and still kept up my credit, though not free from debt.

“I had frequent attacks of sickness; and, after one long and dangerous illness, which had occasioned heavy additional expenses, my wife, who was seldom disposed to distrust providence, lamented to me the increase of our debts, as the medical charges amounted to above 10*l.* It was my turn, on this occasion, to be the stronger in faith; and I answered confidently, ‘Now observe if the Lord do not, in some way, send us an additional supply to meet this expense, which it was not in our power to avoid.’ I had, at the time, no idea of any source from which this ad-



ditional supply was to be derived: but, in the afternoon of the same day, when I was visiting my people, Mr. Higgins, jun. called at my house and left a paper which he said, when I had filled up the blanks, would intitle me to 10*l.* from the sum of money left for the relief of poor clergymen. This I never received at any other time, nor can I recollect the source from which it came.”

The remarks which I would make upon this incident are the following: That whatever may be thought of it, the fact no doubt happened as here related: that my father was not disposed to expect *extraordinary* interpositions of providence, or to make a display of them when they appeared to take place: that it is by no means uncommon for good men, of the most sober minds, circumstanced as he was, to meet with such occurrences; which form one among many means of rendering their scanty supplies a source of greater enjoyment, than the more ample provision of their richer brethren frequently proves: and, finally, that I believe *every* careful observer will find remarkable *coincidences* in the course of events, which he will feel it right to note, as subjects of grateful remembrance to himself, whether he deem it proper to communicate them to others or not. “Whoso is wise will ponder these things: and they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord.”

“About this time,” he proceeds, “I began, with great caution, to administer medical assistance to a few of my poor neighbours, and Mr. (now Dr.) Kerr, of Northampton,<sup>1</sup> bestowed some pains in directing

<sup>1</sup> Still practising there in the full enjoyment of his mental powers, though many years older than my father.

my proceedings : for he felt, as I have always done, that the poor in country villages are under great and pitiable disadvantages in this respect, which no humanity of their neighbours, without medical skill, can prevent. I had before paid some attention to the study of medicine ; and now, having so eminently skilful an adviser ready to give me counsel and aid, I made progress ; and, being always cautious not to act beyond my knowledge, I had great success at small expence. It may not be impertinent to remark, that, from that time to the present, I have constantly had medical advice for myself and my family gratis ; and my annual charge for medicines, including those distributed to the poor, has been less, on an average, than my apothecary's bill used previously to be.

“ Concerning the progress of my mind at this time, in its religious inquiries, I need not add to what I have written in the Force of Truth.”

From that narrative we may observe, that this year, 1777, was marked as bringing his religious inquiries to a decisive result, and giving somewhat of mature form to his scheme of doctrine. In the course of it his views were cleared up, and his sentiments established, successively, upon the doctrines of the atonement, human depravity, the Trinity, justification, the work of the Holy Spirit, and finally, on that of personal election. Now also he was enabled, after many conflicts with himself, to make his last and most trying sacrifice, that of reputation ; and calmly, yea, cheerfully, to submit to “ suffer reproach,” and to be accounted, “ a fool for Christ's sake.” From about the close of this year, he began with profit to hear Mr. Newton preach ; and, being established in the

belief of the great truths of the gospel, to cherish their proper influence upon his own heart and life.

Some further extracts from an interesting letter to his elder sister, of the 15th of April in this year, parts of which have been already inserted, may bear both on the facts just related and on those which are next to follow.

“It is an uncommon degree of fortitude to be able to set one’s face against the world, and to act contrary to its received maxims and customs. The soldier, who is bold as a lion in the day of battle, turns coward here; and dares not refuse a challenge, though his reason, his religion, the laws of the land, and his own inclination, are all directly contrary to it; though his life and soul are at stake. Such a tyrant is custom! Who dare oppose him? I will tell you who: the confirmed Christian. *Who is he that overcometh the world? Even he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God. And this is the victory, even our faith.* These are the only men who ever dare to obey God rather than man, where the two are in direct opposition. But it is not every Christian, no, nor every good and pious Christian, who can thus courageously act, and undauntedly follow the dictates of conscience, when friends, relations, and all those whom one has been used to reverence and love, are of a contrary opinion; especially if the case be dubious, and much may be said on both sides. This is the last victory the Christian gains. He will master, by that grace which is given of God, his own lusts and passions, and all manner of inward and outward temptations; he will be dead to the interests, pleasures, and diversions of the world; and his affections

will be earnestly set upon things above; long before he has mastered this fear of men. . . . Here I find my own deficiency, as much or more than in any other respect: and often I feel an inward timidity, when about to preach an unpopular doctrine, or expose a foible which some one of my congregation, whom I otherwise love and esteem, is remarkable for: and in every instance I feel the greatest reluctance to resign the good opinion, or act contrary to the judgment of those for whom I have an esteem. It is true I am peculiarly bound to strive against this, by reason of my ministerial office. I am to speak boldly, *not as a man-pleaser, but as the servant of God*: and therefore I endeavour to master all these fears, and to act implicitly as my conscience suggests, without respect of persons. Conformity to others in things unchristian, the fear of men, a servile spirit of timeserving, &c. are the faults of ministers, and effectually hinder even those who desire it, from performing the most important parts of their ministry, both in public preaching, and by private application. But this kind of spirit goeth not out but by a very spiritual and devout course of life. Indeed its expulsion is the gift of God, and is to be specially sought for from him. . . . To betray the more important, in order to secure the lesser interest, is a thing I could not do; and I have too great an opinion of your sincerity in your profession as a Christian, to think you would wish it. But perfection is not attainable here; and, had we nothing else to trust to for acceptance with God, but our own imperfect righteousness, we should have little to support us, and should have a strong temptation to despair, as soon as ever we became acquainted with the

strictness of God's law, and our own transgressions of it daily and hourly repeated. But thank God, the wound is no sooner given, than the remedy is applied: our self-dependence is no sooner undermined, than we are supplied with a more sure ground of dependence, even the merits and sufferings of our crucified Redeemer. May you and I, and all ours, have, by true, lively, humble faith, an interest in him!"

The next occurrence, recorded in the memoir, marks the faithfulness with which my father was now discharging the duties of his ministry, not only in the congregation, but towards his parishioners individually; and the success of an attempt, which could not be made but at a considerable expense of feeling, may encourage others not to decline such services.

"In the summer of this year (1777) Mr. Higgins, who was formerly mentioned, returned from London in a very bad state of health, and I soon found that his disorder was dropsy; the symptoms of which afforded no hopes of his recovery, or long continuance in life: yet no one gave him the least intimation of his danger. I could not consider him as in a decidedly prepared state: nay, I greatly doubted his experimental acquaintance with religion. He was my superior and benefactor. He was old and I was young. I knew not how to act: but I could have no peace without attempting something. After much consideration and prayer, therefore, I wrote to him, in the kindest and most grateful manner I could; but plainly informing him what the physicians thought of his disease, and not obscurely intimating my fears in respect of his immortal soul. I was greatly afraid that some of the family would be of-

fended at this proceeding, especially if he himself should not take it well. But he expressed great approbation and thankfulness; and I was requested to visit him daily as a minister: which I did, conversing very plainly with him, and always concluding with prayer. He heard me attentively; was at times affected; and always seemed pleased with my assiduity, though he spoke little. His end proved to be nearer than any one expected, and he expired suddenly in his chair, without saying any thing particular. I however had done my duty: I trust my endeavours were made useful to his widow; and certainly I lost no favour by my honesty—which is not, in such cases, by any means so perilous as we are often apt to suppose it. I was also desired to write an inscription for his monument, which was, to me, a very difficult task: but I was enabled to execute it to the satisfaction of the parties concerned.

“ In the former part of my life I had been exceedingly fond of *cards*. Indeed I showed a propensity to gaming, from which many bad consequences had been foreboded; but ill success on one occasion, long before I attended to religion, had rescued me from this; and, at the time of which I am now writing, I had lost all my relish for the diversion of cards, and every other of a similar nature. I, however, occasionally joined in a game, from an idea that too great preciseness might prejudice my neighbours: and I was then of opinion, that there was no harm in the practice, though it seemed a frivolous way of spending time. I *felt* it also a very awkward transition to remove the cardtable, and

introduce the Bible and family worship; though I never omitted this service at home, and commonly proposed it in my visits. My fetters were, however, broken effectually, and at once, about January 1778, in the following manner. Being on a visit to one of my parishioners at Ravenstone, I walked out after dinner, as was my common practice on such occasions, to visit some of my poor people; when one of them (the first person, as far as I know, to whom my ministry had been made decidedly useful,) said to me, ‘I have something which I wish to say to you, but I am afraid you may be offended.’ I answered, that I could not promise, but I hoped I should not. She then said, ‘You know A. B.: he has lately appeared attentive to religion, and has spoken to me concerning the sacrament: but last night he, with C. D. and some others, met to keep Christmas; and they played at cards, drank too much, and in the end quarrelled, and raised a sort of riot. And when I remonstrated with him on his conduct, as inconsistent with his professed attention to religion, his answer was, There is no harm in cards: Mr. Scott plays at cards!’—This smote me to the heart. I saw that, if I played at cards, however soberly and quietly, the people would be encouraged by my example to go further: and, if St. Paul would *eat no flesh while the world stood, rather than cause his weak brother to offend*, it would be inexcusable in me to throw such a stumbling-block in the way of my parishioners, in a matter certainly neither needful nor expedient. So far from being offended at the hint thus given me, I felt very thankful to my faithful monitor, and promised her

that she should never have occasion to repeat the admonition. That very evening I related the whole matter to the company, and declared my fixed resolution never to play at cards again. I expected that I should be harassed with solicitations; but I was never asked to play afterwards. Let me therefore from my own experience, as well as from the reason of the case, urge persons, from their first entrance upon a religious course, when asked to do any thing which they disapprove, fairly to state their disapprobation as a point of conscience. For not only is this most becoming those *in whom there is no guile*, but it is also by far the most *prudent* proceeding. If they assign reasons drawn only from local and temporary circumstances, when those circumstances are changed, they will be pressed again and again with redoubled earnestness; whereas, if they once fairly declare their refusal to be the result of deliberate consideration, and the dictate of conscience, the hope of prevailing upon them will be given up, and they will save themselves great trouble and danger.

“Let me also observe, that the minister, who would not have his people give into such worldly conformity as he disapproves, must keep at a considerable *distance* from it himself. If he walk near the brink, others will fall down the precipice.—When I first attended seriously to religion, I used sometimes, when I had a journey to perform on the next day, to ride a stage in the evening, after the services of the sabbath; and I trust my time on horseback was not spent unprofitably. But I soon found that this furnished an excuse to some of my parishioners, for employing a considerable part of the Lord’s day in



journeys of business or convenience. I need scarcely add, that I immediately abandoned the practice, on the same ground on which I resolved never more to play at cards, even before I thought so unfavourably of them as I now do.

“ In this connexion I may take occasion to mention my estrangement from another favourite diversion, at a still earlier period. In the former part of my life, I had been extravagantly fond of seeing plays acted, even in the rude manner in which they are performed in country places. Hence I anticipated the highest pleasure from visiting a London theatre. But I never went more than once: for I witnessed so much folly and wickedness, and heard so much profaneness and ribaldry, both from the stage, and in other parts of the theatre, that I resolved, on leaving the house, never to go to a play again. Yet this was in April 1773, before my mind was in any material degree turned towards religion, and nearly five years previously to my giving up cards.<sup>1</sup>

“ My unreserved, and often, no doubt, forward and rash avowal of the change, which had taken place in my religious views and purposes, soon induced most of my former acquaintances to avoid me. Thus I escaped hearing the scoffs and reproaches which were uttered against me in abundance behind my back; and was also exempted from many temptations: but, perhaps, I at the same time lost some openings for usefulness, which might have been afforded

<sup>1</sup> I would refer the reader for some of the most forcible observations on the theatre, that I have any where met with, to Mr. Pearson's *Life of Mr. Hey*, part ii. p. 242, &c.

me. One clergyman, however, who possessed more doctrinal knowledge than many, and with whom I had been somewhat intimate, would not thus give me up.—My time was much occupied with study and the preparation of sermons; (for I preached and lectured five times in the week,—three of which were gratuitous services;) so that trifling visitors were very unwelcome: but, as this clergyman frequently visited at Mrs. Throckmorton's, (the Roman catholic family resident in the village,) when he had nothing to engage him at the Hall, he used to call upon me in the forenoons, and try to enter into dispute with me on the doctrines of the gospel; especially the high points usually denominated Calvinistic. Finding this very unprofitable, I one day said to him: 'You are not, I presume, aware, sir, that we differ more in our sentiments on practical subjects, than even with respect to these doctrines.' So far from allowing this, he maintained, that on such subjects we were perfectly agreed: while I, to support my position, read him a lecture on the duties of a clergyman, according to my views of them. I pointed out what the minister's motives and aim ought to be; and how his time ought to be divided, between his studies (especially the study of the holy scriptures) and private devotion; preparing his sermons; catechizing children; instructing the ignorant; visiting the sick; and conversing with his people. I hence inferred, that the consistent clergyman could have no time to spare for unprofitable visits and vain diversions; and but little for any visits, except in suberviency to religious edification and usefulness. 'And now, sir,' I said at the conclusion, 'do we not differ

on this practical subject, at least as much as respecting justification or election? He had no answer to make; and he never more came to interrupt my studies. I am sorry to add, that no further good effect was produced.

“ My vicar at Ravenstone, in proportion as I became more decided in my views, and especially more instant in preaching, increasing the length, as well as the frequency, of my sermons; both of his own instance, and as excited by others, showed more marked opposition to my proceedings. Sometimes his opposition assumed an angry and menacing form, and, alas! more than once produced in me reciprocal anger: yet my arguments from our Liturgy and Articles always proved to him unanswerable. At other times his tone was more playful and jocose. One day he remonstrated with me on the length of my sermons, (which fell not much short of an hour;) and he mentioned by name several clergymen who preached twenty, fifteen, twelve, or even ten minutes. My answer was, that I feared they were in jest; but I was in earnest. On another occasion he objected to my writing so many new sermons; principally, I believe, because he had been used to be diverted by my company, and my time was now otherwise engaged. He observed that, for his own part, when he was ordained, he had written fifty-four or fifty-five sermons, and they had served him very well ever since; though he had been above fifty years in orders. I remarked, that I hoped he had, during that long period, grown much wiser: but that he had effectually precluded his people from profiting by his improvement!

“ In this way, sometimes by argument, and some-

times by replies half serious and half playful, I maintained my ground: till at length the old gentleman was so impressed by what he heard and saw, that he forbore, for a time, all opposition; vindicated me against censure; wept frequently under my sermons; and was found uniformly, when we called upon him, reading the scriptures: so that the most sanguine hopes were entertained concerning him. But, alas! it was *the morning cloud, and the early dew which passeth away*. The whole gradually wore off, and terminated in a sort of sceptical, sneering apathy. He continued, however, much attached to me, and did not object to my views of Christianity; and I only speak what many thought and said, when I state, that it seemed probable, that, by a little politic management, I might have inherited his property. But by nature I was too *proud* for such an attempt; and, I hope, through grace I was become too *conscientious* to make the requisite concessions. I however retained the curacy, till, much against his wishes, I voluntarily resigned it.

“After some time a house at Weston belonging to Mr. C. Higgins became vacant, and was offered me at less than half the rent (of 12*l.*) which I had previously paid: and I accordingly removed to it.<sup>1</sup>—In this village two sons were born to me, one of whom died an infant, and the other, of the same name, (Thomas,) is now minister of the episcopal chapel of Gawcott, in the parish of Buckingham. Some time after I removed to the house just mention-

<sup>1</sup> In fact Mr. H. took no rent of me, but a hamper of pears, annually, from a fine tree in the garden, for which he regularly sent me a receipt.

ed, I had three children living: but two were taken from me within a very short time, and John, the only surviving one, was so dangerously ill, that his life was not expected. My heart was overwhelmed: but, after very much prayer, I felt my will submissive, and was resigned to part with him also, unless it should please God to spare him to do some good in the world. He shortly after recovered; and, I trust, was spared for usefulness.—But I have here anticipated; as some things, about to be stated, occurred before these events.”

In the last-mentioned incident, my dear father records what deeply and lastingly affected his own mind, and what he has often, in relating it, made affecting to the minds of others—particularly of him who now remarks upon it. Neither was it forgotten amid the solemnities of his dying bed. May the prayers offered up under the pressure of the affliction, and often, no doubt, repeated afterwards through succeeding years, be much more abundantly answered than they have ever yet been!

He adds, “In this situation I wrote and published the Force of Truth; which was revised by Mr. Cowper, and, as to style and externals, but not otherwise, considerably improved by his advice.”

On this publication, which has already been repeatedly referred to, I shall here make no further remark, than that the first edition is dated February 26, 1779; deferring, with respect to it, as I shall do with respect to my father's other works, whatever observations I may have to offer, to the close of these memoirs.

## CHAPTER VI.

### LETTERS BELONGING TO THE PERIOD OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

HERE again it may be proper to suspend a little the progress of the narration, for the purpose of introducing to the reader's notice extracts of several letters, bearing upon the events, or pertaining to the times, which we have been reviewing.—The following relate to the deaths which have been mentioned, and some others with which, about this period, my father's family was visited.

To my mother's sister, dated October 19, 1779 :  
“ I have to inform you that it has pleased the Lord, who gave, also to take away from us, our youngest boy, your husband's godson ; and thereby to discharge both him and us from our trust. After a lingering and wasting disorder, in which the poor thing appeared to suffer very much, he was released from this world of sin and sorrow, and, I doubt not, joined the blessed assembly above, to unite in their song of praise to *Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed them to God with his blood.* He died on the morning of September 25th. Nature will feel and heave the anxious sigh, but faith looks within the veil, beholds the happy deliverance, approves, and rejoices : and I trust we both are enabled to say from our hearts,

*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away : blessed be the name of the Lord.* So long as the poor infant was amongst the number of sufferers, it was a sharp trial to us both ; but, when he was released, I believe, in our better judgment, we both rejoiced.— But I am speaking all these things to one who knows not experimentally a parent's heart ; and, if I can judge by myself, and my way of thinking before I was a parent, I can fancy you saying, ' There is no such great loss, nor such a mighty resignation, in being willing to part with a little infant, that seems well out of the way.' Thus I used to think : but it comes nearer a parent's heart than you can imagine : and it would be no easy matter to me to resign patiently to this loss, were it not that I assuredly believe that, as the Lord knows best what is good for me, so he is engaged by promise to make all work together for my good ; and were I not also assured (which too often one cannot be concerning deceased persons,) that he is now a blessed spirit in heaven ; from whence, if they in heaven have knowledge of the concerns of those they leave behind, he looks down, with a mixture of pity and astonishment, to see us so ignorantly, I had almost said enviously, wishing him a sharer of our vain enjoyments, embittered with numberless sorrows, and defiled by continual sins.—Death has been very busy indeed of late in my family. Within about six years I have lost my father and mother, two own sisters, two brothers in law, an own aunt, a nephew, and a son. These are remembrancers to me to take heed, be ready, watch, and pray, for I know not when the time is. As such losses loosen our hearts gradu-

ally from the world, so they also make us feel ourselves dying creatures. Hearing of one, and then another, and then another taken off by such unexpected strokes, I seem to wonder at myself, that I am yet spared; and to fancy I see death brandishing his lance over my head, ready to strike the fatal blow. I feel to stand on the brink of a precipice, ready by the slightest touch to be thrown down into eternity. I seem to hear a voice behind me saying, *Prepare to meet thy God*. I bless the Lord, this fills me with no uneasy, anxious thoughts. Through grace, I trust that, having, as a poor sinner, *fled for refuge to the hope set before us* in a crucified Saviour, through the sprinkling of his most precious blood, my soul is cleansed from the guilt of all its sins; and that I have the experience of what is meant by *the sanctification of the spirit unto obedience*; and can join with Peter, 1st Epist. i. 2—4, (to which I refer you,) and therefore can say, *I know that, when this earthly house of my tabernacle shall be dissolved, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*. And, as to those that belong to me, though they are my closest tie to life, I can nevertheless leave them with satisfaction in the hands of that God, who hath fed me all my life long, and who hath said, *Leave thy fatherless children with me, and I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me*.—However you will observe that I am at present in a very tolerable state of health, and no more like dying, than at any other time in my whole life; and, though we may not argue from such reasons, yet I sometimes fancy, that the Lord has somewhat more for me to do, before he



takes me to that rest reserved for the people of God. —However, this habitual frame of mind, which my own frequent sickness, and so many instances of mortality have brought me into, doth very much mortify me to this world; and I cannot but wonder to think of my former castle-building frame of mind, when, with eager hopes and sanguine expectations, I was forming schemes of satisfying and durable happiness in such a vain uncertain world. My dreams and visions are now vanished like a morning cloud. I find now that neither riches, nor preferment, nor reputation, nor pleasure, nor any worldly good, can afford that happiness I was seeking. I bless the Lord, I did not discover the cheat, nor lose the shadow, before I found the substance. I did not discover all else to be vanity and vexation of spirit, until I found out, that *to fear God and keep his commandments is the whole of man*. Oh how many thousands, that, like him in the gospel who never lifted up his eyes till in hell, never find their sad mistake till it is too late! When I look around upon a busy bustling world, eagerly pursuing vanity and courting disappointment, neglecting nothing so much as the one thing needful; and who, in order to have their portion in this life, disregard the world to come, and only treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; it makes me think of a farmer, who should, with vast labour, cultivate his lands, and gather in his crop, and thresh it out, and separate the corn from the chaff, and then sweep the corn out upon the dunghill, and carefully lay by the chaff! Such a person would be supposed mad: but how faint a shadow would this be of *his* madness, who labours for the

meat that perisheth, but neglects that which endureth unto everlasting life!—This is all unpremeditated: I must leave you to apply it. It is a madness the whole race of men labours under, unless and until divine grace works the cure: until it may be said of us, as of the returning prodigal, *When he came to himself, he said, &c.*—You will excuse, I hope, the mention of such important subjects. My only apology is, that we are creatures formed for eternity: and my wish and prayer are, that, whether we meet on earth or not, we may spend eternity together in heaven. If we are all in the right way, we do well to encourage and quicken one another; and, if otherwise, the sooner we set out the better.”

The following passages relate to a death which still more deeply affected him.

To his elder sister, May 30, 1780. “The occasion of my writing is to inform you, that the Lord has been pleased to take my poor dear daughter from me by a sudden stroke. She was in perfect health, and a breathless corpse, within less than eighteen hours. . . . A sweeter child and dearer to her parents’ hearts could scarcely be: and, whilst I looked upon her promising advances in knowledge, and apparently Christian converse, tempers, and conduct, (which were almost incredible,) I promised myself great comfort in her; and did not understand, that the Lord, by bringing her forward so very much beyond her years, was only preparing her for himself, and ripening her for glory. But I shall say no more of her. If ever we meet, and you desire it, I can give you an account of such things concerning her, as will surprise you. This is my great comfort.”

It will no doubt surprise the reader to be informed, that this is written concerning a child only four years and a half old. But it is implied that the case was extraordinary: my father always considered it as the most remarkable that had fallen under his own observation; and he has left a short memorial of it, which will be annexed to the present publication. But I here subjoin an extract of another letter, to which the preceding gave occasion.

To same, July 6, 1780. “Concerning my poor dear babe . . . . . truly I grieved, and felt more than ever I felt before of that grief, which springs from being bereaved of one much beloved: and my heart bleeds, if I may thus speak, at every remembrance of her. But I do not grieve *as one without hope*: hope of meeting her in glory, and spending a joyful eternity together.—I do not grieve so as to *indulge* grief or complaining, or think (with Jonah,) *I do well to be angry*, because my darling gourd is withered. God hath done well, and wisely, and graciously; and, whilst my heart is pained, my judgment is satisfied. I do not now wish it otherwise. She might have lived, in some way or other, to have filled my soul with un-mixed bitterness, and to have *brought down my grey hairs* (if I live to grey hairs,) *with sorrow to the grave*.—I do not grieve so as not to rejoice: rejoice to recollect what I cannot now particularize of her amazing understanding and answers, teachableness and conscientiousness; which makes me not doubt that she was, in a measure, like John the Baptist, taught by the Holy Ghost from her mother’s womb: for none could speak and act as she did but by the Holy Ghost:—rejoice, to think that I have two chil-

dren adopted into God's family, taken home to his house, and filled with his love. It is a high honour, and I ought to rejoice in it. Dearly as I love my only remaining babe, and much as I long to keep him, I had rather see him die, as my poor dear girl did, than live rich and honoured, without he live the life of a true Christian. She has got free from all that I long to be delivered from; and has attained all I am longing for. *I shall go to her, but she shall not return to me.*—You mention the *supposed* loss of your sweet babes. Whilst I pray God to preserve them to you, and you to them, I cannot but advise you to rejoice in them with trembling, and to be often preparing, in thinking and praying concerning it, for a separation: for we are tenants at will concerning all our comforts.—When you call them sweet innocent creatures, I hope you only mean comparatively, and to our apprehensions; not forgetting the words of our Catechism, that we are ‘born in sin, and the children of wrath.’ The youngest needs the blood of Christ to wash away the guilt, and the Spirit of Christ to cleanse away the pollution of sin: and they should be taught, as soon as they know any thing, to consider themselves as sinners, and to pray for the pardon of sin, and a new heart and nature, in and through Jesus Christ. This my poor babe did by herself alone, as duly as the morning and evening came.—But enough, and probably too much of this, which I hope you will not take ill. . . .”

One of the “brothers in law,” of whose death mention has been made in the above extracts, was the husband of Mrs. Webster, to whom these and so many others of his letters are addressed. She

had been married only five years, and was now left (September, 1779,) with two children, and the near prospect of the birth of a third; besides many other difficulties to struggle with. These circumstances, of so beloved a relative, naturally called forth all the tender sympathies of my father's heart; and he wrote to her several letters full of affectionate condolence, and wise and Christian counsel. Some of them I should with pleasure insert, were I not restrained by the fear of extending my extracts beyond due bounds.

We have seen the spirit with which my father, at this period, bore severe trials of one class; I shall next furnish specimens of the temper which he manifested under those of another description.

Intimations have already appeared, that the change, which had taken place in his religious views, was not agreeable to others of his family besides his deceased father. In this respect he, for a considerable time, suffered an affliction, in which, as in almost all others, those who are exercised with it, may derive comfort from reflecting, that the divine Redeemer learned by experience to sympathize with his followers. Of him it is written, "Neither did his brethren believe in him." Happily there is the less reason, in the present instance, for being restrained by delicacy from adverting to this subject, because *all* the parties referred to were ultimately brought to an acquiescence in their brother's sentiments; and those, in particular, with whom we are here most concerned, eventually bore that regard for his character, and that love to his principles,

that I am persuaded they would have wished nothing to be withheld, which might advantageously illustrate the one, or tend to promote the other; even though it should cast a little passing blame upon themselves.

A letter of October 13, 1778, to his elder sister, which makes mention of “a very bad and dangerous illness after his return from London,” and also of “finding so much writing very prejudicial to his health,” contains further intimations of the kind alluded to; and at the same time well illustrates the very prudent and proper course which he pursued, and which indeed the progress of his own mind naturally suggested to him, in treating with his correspondent upon the subjects nearest his heart.

“You seemed to think, when you were with us, that I wanted to impose a set of notions upon you in religion: but that is not my aim. If you ask me what my belief is, I am willing to declare it: but otherwise I have no ambition to make proselytes to an opinion. My design is to make converts to the substantial duties of a religious and godly life: to persuade people that eternity is of most consequence: that they ought not to be so careful and troubled about many things, as to neglect the one thing needful: that our religion is all contained in the Bible: that we ought to read that book not only to learn what to do, but what to believe: that God is the giver of wisdom; the Holy Spirit the teacher of the truth: that, before we understand the scripture aright, we must have our minds opened and prepared by the Spirit of God—for *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for*

*they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned: in short, that we are to trust in the Lord with all our heart, and not to lean to our own understanding: that therefore we ought to be constant in prayer to God, that he would teach us the true way of salvation—for his secret is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant; that he would preserve us from mistake, lead us to know his truth, free us from prejudice and pride, and give us that true wisdom which is from above.*—Three years and a half I have day by day, and many times a day, done this. Since I did so, I have found myself much changed in my views and notions of religion: and, as I am comfortably assured that the Lord hath heard and answered my prayers; and as I not only feel the effect of it in myself, but see the effect of the alteration of my preaching, in the very wonderful change of many profligate sinners to a sober, righteous, and godly life; I therefore, wherein I suppose I was before wrong myself, hint it to you and others dear to me. If you think differently from me, you cannot deny that the means I prescribe are right, safe, scriptural, and a duty. There I leave it. I profess to believe it the Lord's work: when I have used the means, I leave it to him: and my daily, and more than daily prayer for you, all and every one, is, that the Lord would set you right where wrong; teach you where ignorant; guide you to the knowledge of his saving truth; and fulfil all his gracious promises, spiritual and temporal, to your souls and bodies.—I should be glad if you would say a few words on this subject:

if not, I must be satisfied to leave it where it is. We any of us may be wrong, and therefore we ought not to be too sure we are right; for confidence is no mark of wisdom. It is worth our inquiry and our prayer, and you will not find me hasty to dictate.”

In a subsequent letter, December 15, 1779, while he anticipates her coming to the same views with him, he wisely says, “ I have no expectation that this will be brought about in the way of argumentation and dispute, which generally do too much ruffle the passions, to leave the mind open to an impartial reception of the truth.” He rather expects “ that, under the guidance and secret teaching of the Holy Spirit, gradually opening her understanding to understand the scriptures, and disclosing more and more what passes in her own heart, and what is revealed in the Bible, she will seem to discover it of herself.”

And in a third, dated a month afterwards, he says, “ Your letter, though written not without suspicions that I should disapprove it, is the most comfortable one I have ever received from you since my views of religion were changed; as it leaves me little doubt that the Lord is leading you, in the same gradual manner he led me, to a spiritual and experimental acquaintance with the truth as it is in Jesus!”

Yet, still later than this, he mournfully laments the neglect into which he had fallen with his relations on account of his religious principles; not excepting even those sisters with whom he had long maintained such full and intimate correspondence. “ It is no small concern to me,” he says, “ that you,



and indeed all my relations, should have entirely forgotten that there is such a person as I. If indeed you do think me mistaken, then pray for me that the Lord may set me right, and recover me; and now and then let me hear *something* from you, if you be weary of mentioning religion.—Indeed I do not forget you: not a day passes but I make mention of you in my prayers, nor a post night comes, but it occurs to my mind, that formerly I *used* to hear from you.... I long to hear of your welfare, and should be glad to contribute to it; nor do I yet despair, that we shall one day be of one mind where we most differ: for I do most sincerely beseech the Lord to lead me right wherever I mistake, and to lead you right wherever you mistake; and I beg of you to make the same request. And I hope he regards and will answer: and then, wherever we are either of us wrong, we shall both be brought right at last, and meet like-minded in heaven.”

And yet again: “When I receive no answer for a long time, I cannot but be discouraged, and led to suspect that the reason why my friends do not write is, that they do not desire my letters; and this keeps me from writing except I have business. Otherwise I will assure you, that one post night after another I have complained with a sorrowful heart, that all my relations were weary of me.”

These extracts, and several things which have preceded, may perhaps present my father to some readers in a new point of view. A certain roughness of exterior impressed many persons with the idea that he was harsh and severe. It was reserved to

those who knew him more intimately, to be fully aware how kind and feeling a heart he carried within; a heart which Christian principles, while they fortified the natural firmness of his character, made continually more and more tender and affectionate; and that, as his latter days advanced, to a degree that it is scarcely possible to express.

But, besides this effect of these extracts, I willingly promise myself that they may prove, in various ways, useful to many readers. Some may be taught by them what to expect, and be admonished to “count their cost,” in professing themselves Christ’s disciples. There is an opposition in the human heart to the principles of his religion, really received and acted upon, which no bonds of relative affection can overcome: and hence he assures us, that, “if we love father or mother more than him, we cannot be his disciples.”—To others, they may suggest important hints on the proper manner of conducting themselves under trials of this kind. Let them neither be “ashamed of Christ’s words,” nor too impetuously obtrude them upon unwilling hearers. The caution will be doubly needful, towards persons filling the superior relations in life.—And to all who are endeavouring to pursue a right course themselves, and longing after beloved relatives, “in the bowels of Jesus Christ,” these passages, compared with the result, which has been already stated, may afford great encouragement. Let them always remember the reply of the Christian bishop, to the weeping mother of St. Augustine, “The child of so many prayers can never be lost!”

But the most pleasing proof of the happiness, as well as benevolence, which religion diffused over my father's mind at this period, is furnished by a letter to his younger sister, Mrs. Ford, dated July 27, 1779.

“Hitherto,” he says, “I have kept silence, *yea even from good words: but it was pain and grief to me. . . .* I would, however, once more remind you, that you have a brother—who was no hypocrite when he assured you that he loved you, at least as well as any relation that he had in the world, his wife and children excepted; that your interest and welfare were always near to his heart; that he would have been glad, if it had pleased God, to have had it in his power to evidence this to you by some important service: that his love is not waxed cold, nor in the least diminished, but the contrary; that he loves you as well, and wishes you better than ever; and that, seeing he can do nothing else, he never forgets, in his daily prayers, to commend you and yours, soul and body, to the love, care, and blessing of his God and Saviour.—Dear sister, I can truly say with Paul, that *I have continual sorrow and heaviness in my heart, for my brethren according to the flesh: but on account of none so much as you.* All the rest, though not seeing with my eyes, are friendly and civil, and not willing quite to give me up: but you have totally turned your back on me:—the favourite sister, whose heart seemed as closely knit to mine by the dearest and most confidential friendship, as the nearest relative ties! The very thought brings tears into my eyes, and I weep while I write to you. And what have I done to offend you? It has pleased the Lord,

through my study of his word, with prayer for that teaching which he hath promised, to lead me to a different view of the gospel of Jesus Christ, than I had embraced: and not only so, but to lead me from seeking the favour of the world, and my own glory, to seek God's favour, aim at his glory, and derive happiness from him. A happiness I have therein tasted, to which I was before a stranger: that *peace of God which passeth all understanding*, and which as much excels, even in this world, any thing I had before experienced, as the cheering constant light of the noonday sun exceeds the shortlived glare of a flash of lightning, which leaves the night more dark and gloomy than before. Having found that good I had long been seeking in vain, I was desirous to tell all I loved, in proportion as I loved them, what the Lord had done for me, and how he had had mercy on me; that they might find, what I knew they too were seeking, true happiness. *Come, taste and see how gracious the Lord is, and how blessed they are that put their trust in him*, was the language of my heart. But, for want of experience and prudence, forgetting my own principle, that none can come to Jesus except he be taught of God, (John vi. 44—46,) I was much too earnest, and in a hurry: said too much, and went too far: and thus, out of my abundant love, surfeited you. *Forgive me this wrong!* It was well meant, but illjudged, and worse received. O my dear sister, I wish you as happy as I am myself, and I need wish you no happier in this world. To call God my father; to confide in his love; to realise his powerful presence; to see by faith his wisdom choosing, his love providing for

me, his arm protecting me; to find him (my sins notwithstanding,) reconciled to me, and engaged to bless me; to view him seated on a throne of grace, bowing his ear to my poor prayers, granting my requests, supplying my wants, supporting me under every trial, sweetening and sanctifying every trouble, manifesting his love to me, and comforting me by his Holy Spirit; to look forward to heaven as my home; and to be able to say at night, when I go to rest, If I die before morning, I shall be with my gracious Lord, to enjoy his love for ever: this is my happiness: and what is there in the world worth comparing with it?

‘ Let worldly minds the world pursue,  
It has no charms for me;  
Once I admir’d its trifles too,  
But grace has set me free.’

Peace with God, peace of conscience, peace in my family, peace with all around me; these are *the blessings of peace* which God gives his people. May God give them to you!—I say no more upon doctrines: only search the scriptures, and pray to be taught of God. If I have said too much this time on the subject, I will say less next letter. Only acknowledge me as a brother, and do not quite disown me, as an incorrigible fanatic, because I believe the scriptures, and exhort you to read them, and pray to understand them. . . .

“ I have written a book, now in the press, which will be published in three weeks time, giving an account of the grounds and reasons of the change you so much wonder at; chiefly for the use of my former friends. As you used not to consider me as a fool,

do not condemn my book as foolish, without reading it, and that attentively; and, where we differ, do make it a part of your prayers, that whichever of us is mistaken may be directed to the truth."

Writing to Mr. and Mrs. Ford jointly, September 28th, after allowing the truth of their position, "that it is possible for a person, engaged in the concerns of the world, so to spend his time in his business, as to be doing his duty to God and man," he makes the following remarks: "However, by the way, observe, that very few thus manage their worldly business. Of this you may judge. He, who thus does his worldly business, has it *sanctified by the word of God and prayer*. He goes about it because it is the will of God he should do so. He orders it all in conformity to *his* revealed will, as far as he knows that will; comparing his conduct continually with the word of God. He depends upon the Lord for a blessing in his undertakings, and seeks it in prayer. What the Lord gives, he receives with thankfulness; as a gift undeserved; as a talent committed to his stewardship; and aims to use it to his glory: not with the miser, as a talent wrapped in a napkin, or buried in the earth: not as provision made for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, with the prodigal: but in temperance, moderation, and a liberal, compassionate beneficence. When the Lord crosses him, he submits, and says, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*: and, when things look dark, he does not murmur or distrust, but says, the Lord will provide."

Another series of letters may also here be adverted

to, extending from the year 1778 to 1785, and addressed to the husband of my mother's sister. They are almost entirely religious, but being chiefly occupied in urging first principles, they will not furnish more than a few extracts in this place, illustrative of the writer's zeal, faithfulness, and spiritual wisdom.

“ August 11, 1778. Religion was so much the subject of conversation with us when you were in Bucks, that I hope it will not be a disagreeable subject of correspondence. I am so deeply sensible of the importance of religion, that is, of the concerns of eternity, the interests of our immortal souls, and the way and manner wherein we may be accepted by a just, holy, almighty, and eternal God, that I am naturally led to think every one as much impressed with the sense of these things as I am; though I have abundant evidence that there are but very few, who pay much regard to them: and, of those who do pay some regard, most are so much blinded and prejudiced by the world, by Satan, and by sin, that their religion is one of their own making, and they know little of that religion which the word of God proposes to us. You may remember that, though I told you my views of religion over and over, yet I laid little stress upon that. I told you withal that I did not want you to believe them because I taught them, but because the Lord taught them. The Bible being the word of God, his message to us, *able to make us wise unto salvation*, the great point I laboured to impress upon your mind was, the absolute necessity of taking our religion from that book alone, and the obligation we

are under *to search the scriptures daily* to know what indeed they do contain; to receive what they contain as certain truth, however man, even learned men, and preachers, may contradict them, and however contrary they may be to our former notions and conceptions, and how mysterious soever some things in them may appear. The next thing I laboured to impress was, the necessity of prayer, in general, for whatever we want; but especially, when we read the word of God, that we may be enabled by the Holy Spirit to understand it."

"January 15, 1779. Whether you know it or not, (I hope you will know it,) before you can serve God with comfort and acceptance you need these two things. First, forgiveness of sins. You have been sinning against God in thought, word, and deed, all your life; as we all have. Your sins of heart and life, of omission and commission, stand against you, and, till they be accounted for and forgiven, your services cannot be accepted. Every duty you do is short of its perfection, and as such adds to your sins and needs forgiveness. In this case the gospel reveals forgiveness, through the blood of Christ, *freely* given to every sinner who believes. *Believe, and thou shalt be saved.* Accept this freely, as it is offered, and seek, by prayer, for faith to believe this record which God gives of his Son: and then, your sins being forgiven, you will no longer look upon God as an austere master, or severe judge, but as a loving father, and will with acceptance and comfort pay your services, though imperfect. For, secondly, you need moreover a willing mind,



and strength to resist temptation. Hitherto, I dare say, you have constrained your inclination in what you have done in religion: but, if you are brought to faith, *living* faith in Christ, he will give you other inclinations, *a new heart, and a new spirit*, a new nature. Then *his yoke will be easy; his commandments not grievous; his ways, ways of pleasantness.*"

"Nov. 2, 1780. May I conjecture the reason of your silence? If I am mistaken, I hope you will not be offended, as I am solicitous about you, and fearful *lest by any means the tempter have tempted you, and my labour should be in vain*: which to lose would be a great grief to me, to you an — I cannot express what!—Is not the case thus? When you had got home, and engaged afresh in worldly business, and got again among former companions, were you not carried away with the stream? Your impressions gradually wearing off, and conscience making fainter and fainter resistance, hath not *your goodness proved like the morning dew, that passeth away?* . . . Oh how glad should I be to find myself mistaken in this! for God is my record how earnestly *I long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ*: that I do bear a truly brotherly affection towards you, long for your welfare, and not wholly forget to pray for you, and still hope that my prayers shall be answered."

"January 11, 1781. I rejoice exceedingly at what you tell me concerning yourself. I would not say too much in the way of encouragement. . . . I have seen hopeful awakenings wear off: therefore be jealous of yourself: *be not high minded, but fear: press forward, forgetting the things that are behind, and*

*reaching forth to the things that are before.* But I will venture to say, that your last letter has made my heart leap for joy, and makes me confidently hope for a happy issue, an effectual answer to the many prayers I have, and your sister has offered for you. . . . You speak of the reproach of the world: rejoice in it. What, are you unwilling to be put upon a footing with apostles, and prophets, yea with your master himself?"

I flatter myself I need offer no apology for extracts presenting so lively and affecting a picture of the writer's mind, and exhibiting in him already so strong a resemblance of what he himself has described, as St. Paul's temper, in the opening of his treatise on Growth in Grace. "The apostle Paul," he says, "was evidently a man of strong passions and peculiar sensibility; and, being by divine grace exceedingly filled with love to the Lord Jesus, and to the souls of men, his mind was affected with the most lively emotions of joy or sorrow, hope or fear, according to the tidings he received from the several churches of Christ. At one time he complains that he *has no rest in his flesh, is filled with heaviness, and can no longer forbear*; and that he *writes out of much affliction, with anguish of heart, and with many tears.* At another he declares that he is *filled with comfort, and is exceedingly joyful in all his tribulation*, being comforted by the faith of his beloved children: for *now*, says he, *we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.*"—He understands the apostle, indeed, to "intimate, that these were *things which concerned his infirmities*: and doubtless," he says, "this sanguine disposition requires much correction and regu-

lation by divine grace : but, when it is thus tempered and counterbalanced by proportionable humility, wisdom, patience, and disinterestedness, it may be considered as the main spring of a minister's activity. And, as these united qualifications certainly conduced very much to the apostle's extraordinary usefulness, so they render his epistles peculiarly interesting to us, in all our inquiries concerning the best methods of promoting the enlargement and prosperity of the church, and the edification of all the true disciples of the Lord Jesus."

## CHAPTER VII.

FROM THE FIRST PROPOSAL OF THE CURACY OF  
OLNEY TO THE CLOSE OF HIS MINISTRY  
THERE.

“IN 1780<sup>1</sup> Mr. Newton removed to London. When he had determined on this step, he proposed to me, with considerable earnestness, that I should succeed him in the curacy of Olney, which he had sufficient influence to procure for me. I felt great reluctance to comply with the proposal, both because it would remove me from Ravenstone, hitherto the principal sphere of my usefulness; and also because, from my acquaintance with the leading people at Olney, (where I had frequently preached,) and from other circumstances, I was sure that my plain distinguishing style of preaching, especially as connected with my comparative youth, would not be acceptable there. I was convinced that, even from Mr. Newton, many could not endure what I should deem it my duty to inculcate: how then could it be expected that they should endure it from me? Mr. N.’s persuasions, however, with those of a few of his friends, extorted my unwilling consent. But as soon as it was known, that he meant me to be his successor, so general and violent an opposition was excited, that

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Newton’s first sermon at St. Mary Woolnoth’s was preached December 19, 1779.

he said to me by letter, ‘I believe Satan has so strong an objection to your coming to Olney, that it would probably be advisable to defer it for the present.’ This rejoiced me and many others: but our joy was not of long duration. Let this statement be kept in mind, when the censures on my ministry at Olney come under consideration.

“The person, on whom the prevailing party at Olney had fixed as successor to Mr. N., was in *his* opinion, as well as in that of all other competent judges, the most improper that could have been selected, being completely antinomian in principle and practice. I never saw Mr. N. so much disconcerted as on this occasion. But opposition was like pouring oil into the fire. He therefore gave way, but with a kind of foreboding prediction of the consequences, at least of some of them.”

The following events, which occurred between the time of the proposed removal to Olney being abandoned, and that of its being subsequently carried into effect, may seem to exhibit my father more as a physician than as a divine: they all tend, however, to display his character.

“Just before Mr. N. left Olney, the small pox made its appearance there, and, in a considerable measure through the intractable behaviour of the inhabitants, both in opposing inoculation, (which Mr. N. also disapproved,) and in treating the diseased persons in a manner which almost wholly defeated the efforts of their medical attendants, a most extraordinary mortality prevailed; the funerals during the year subsequent to Mr. N.’s removal amounting to more than twice the number registered in any former year.”

Through shameful negligence and mismanagement, the disease was also communicated to the inhabitants of Ravenstone: and a poor woman, discharging her duties as a midwife, was subjected to infection, in a manner which I can scarcely now reflect upon without indignation. After a short season of exquisite suffering, she died without any eruption appearing; and, being assured by the apothecary who attended her, that the small pox was not her complaint, I preached a funeral sermon for her to a large congregation from all the adjacent villages; the corpse being in the church during the service. But, soon after, every person who had attended her in her illness, and had not previously had the small pox, was taken ill with symptoms indicating that disease. No words can express my anguish and consternation at this event. I took it for granted that numbers of the congregation at the funeral would soon show signs of infection, and that my illjudged zeal, in preaching on the occasion, would prove the means of spreading the dire disease widely in the neighbourhood, and thus furnish an opportunity for abundant reviling to the enemies of religion. My alarm, however, was groundless: not one additional person by this means took the infection; the malady was not communicated to any other village; it spread but little in Ravenstone; and not one person died, except the poor woman who had brought the disease into the village.”

My father here enters, with more medical detail than might be generally interesting, into the history of the prevalence of the small pox at Ravenstone, and of the gaol fever at Stoke. His observation just made that the former disease “spread but little at Ra-

venstone," seems to refer only to cases of infection. Instances of inoculation appear to have been numerous: and, as he had little confidence in the neighbouring apothecaries, and none in the nurses, who adhered to the exploded method of treatment, he, of his own instance, called in Dr. Kerr, and "under him," he says, "I was physician, apothecary, and almost nurse. I inoculated none, but some inoculated their neighbours, and I subsequently directed their proceedings. Nearly all my time was for some weeks employed. Meanwhile violent clamour was raised against me, and threatenings of an alarming nature were uttered, because I would keep the windows open in the rooms where the diseased persons lay, and would allow those patients, who were able, to walk out in their gardens, or at the back of the village."

On the subject of inoculation itself he had also great difficulties to contend with. Two of his own family (his only surviving child and an orphan nephew) had not had the small pox. He himself was "always an advocate" for inoculation, but "the prejudices of numbers of religious persons in the neighbourhood were exceedingly strong against it." If he should adopt it, he knew that his conduct "would be severely arraigned by many, and on others would have a powerful influence. On these grounds alone he hesitated." Yet, while thus circumstanced, he constantly attended the sick, as above described. "I kept (he says) an old suit of clothes in a hovel at Ravenstone, and before I went among the sick I changed *all* my clothes in the hovel, and I did the same again before I returned home. Yet I still thought that I hardly did my duty to my family." At length there-

fore, he had the children inoculated, and procured them lodgings at Ravenstone. "They passed through the disorder very well, but during their residence at that place (he proceeds,) I met with some instances of such base ingratitude, in respect of this affair, from those whom I had most laboured to serve, that, in a very ill humour, I returned home one evening, deliberately resolved to go no more among the people, but to leave them to the consequences of their perverseness. While cherishing this determination, the words of the apostle, *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*, occurred to my recollection in a manner which I shall never forget. I am no friend to *suggestions* or *impressions*, in the general sense of the terms; but I cannot doubt, that this most excellent scriptural admonition, so exactly suited to the state of my mind, was *brought to my remembrance* by the Holy Spirit. (See John xiv. 26.) It at once set me right; and converted my murmurings into humble confessions, thankful praises, and fervent prayers. I persevered in my *work and labour of love*, and the event proved highly gratifying and creditable. I never in my life spent so much time, with such earnestness, in secret and social prayer, as during this trying season; and every prayer seemed to be answered and exceeded. I had my vexations: but I would gladly go through them all again, if I might enjoy the same proportion of consolation, and get as much good to my own soul, and be an instrument of as much good to others, as at that time.

"When all had terminated prosperously respecting the malady, and calumny on that ground was silenced,



a clamour of a widely different nature was raised. 'A poor curate, with a family, had spent in medicines and wine, and given in money, what was enough to ruin him!' Some of the persons concerned as parish officers, or having influence in parish affairs, might easily, and ought certainly, to have set this right. I have no doubt that a very large sum was saved to the parish, yet the officers paid nothing which they could refuse, not even the well-deserved fee to Dr. Kerr. Medicines, wine, and money, when urgently wanted, were applied by me exclusively: on subsequent occasions I was generally, and sometimes liberally, aided by friends: but at this time all stood aloof. The expense, however, was far less than was commonly supposed, except that of my time; which, if calculated at its pecuniary value, might be considerable, but can never be better employed than in gratuitously endeavouring to do good: and, as soon as the objection just mentioned was raised, I received 15*l.* 5*s.* from persons at a distance, unknown to me at the time, and from whom I never before or afterwards received any thing. This more than repaid all my disbursements, and convinced me, *that there is no risk in expending money, in an urgent case, and from good motives; and that a penurious prudence, springing from weak faith, is impolicy as well as sin.*

“Soon after these events a circumstance took place at Stoke, with which I was in some measure concerned, (though not then connected with the parish,) and which appears to me to suggest important cautions. A baker allowed a poor man, his customer, with a large family, to run into his debt to the amount of 10*l.* and then arrested him for the money,

foolishly supposing the overseers would pay it, rather than suffer the man to be thrown into prison. They, of course, disappointed his expectation: the debtor was sent to Aylesbury gaol; where the gaol fever then prevailed. He took that dire disease. His wife went to see and nurse him: he died: she returned home, sickened, and died: the malady spread in the village, sparing the children, but proving fatal to the parents. The neighbouring apothecaries in vain attempted to stop its progress. I also ventured into the recesses of misery and infection, and in a few instances tried my medical skill, as well as gave spiritual counsel. But I soon found that the case baffled all my efforts. I believe forty children had been bereft of one parent, and nearly twenty of both. I knew the overseer: I went to him, and remonstrated with him, on the grounds not only of mercy and humanity, but of policy; and succeeded in convincing him, that no medical expense which could be incurred was likely to burden the parish a tenth part so much, as this fatal progress of the disease was doing. I prevailed with him therefore to send immediately for Dr. Kerr, who came and spent nearly a whole day in the service; and he laid down such rules for the management of the patients, that not one afterwards died, and the disease was speedily extirpated.

“The same fever had broken out in the gaol at Northampton, as well as at Aylesbury: but Dr. Kerr having, as a surgeon in the army, had much experience in diseases of this nature, in camps, garrisons, and military hospitals, so effectually counteracted it, that it was soon expelled and few deaths occurred.”

It may be remarked, that Dr. Kerr formed so fa-

vourable an opinion of my father's medical talent, that he frequently expressed a wish that he would change his profession ; and would never himself give his directions to any other person when he was present.

He proceeds : “ For myself, I was much exposed to infection in this case, but I was preserved : and I never on any occasion received harm from visiting persons afflicted with infectious disorders, except in one instance, in which I had a very severe fever : but I was mercifully carried through it.

“ In this instance, which happened, I believe, before those above related, an incident occurred, on which I never can reflect without astonishment : but I venture my credit for veracity on the exact truth of it. A poor man, most dangerously ill, of whose religious state I entertained some hopes, seemed to me in the agonies of death. I sat by his bed for a considerable time, expecting to see him expire : but at length he awoke as from sleep, and noticed me. I said, ‘ You are extremely ill.’ He replied, ‘ Yes ; but I shall not die this time.’ I asked the ground of this extraordinary confidence, saying that I was persuaded he would not recover. To this he answered : ‘ I have just dreamed that you, with a very venerable looking person, came to me. He asked you, what you thought of me. ‘ What kind of tree is it ? Is there any fruit ?’ You said, ‘ No : but there are blossoms.’ ‘ Well then,’ he said, ‘ I will spare it a little longer.’ All reliance upon such a dream, I should, in other circumstances, have scouted as enthusiasm and presumption : but it so exactly met my ideas as to the man's state of mind, —which, however, I had never communicated to him ; and the event, much beyond

all expectation, so answered his confidence, by his recovery; that I could not but think there was something peculiar in it.

“ On his recovery, this man for a time went on very well: but afterwards he gave up all attention to religion, and became very wicked: and when I reminded him of what has been now related, he treated the whole with indifference; not to say, with profane contempt. But I have since learned, from very good authority, that, after I left that part of the country, he was again brought under deep conviction of sin; recollected and dolefully bemoaned his conduct towards me, and with respect to his dream; and became a decidedly religious character: and, if this be true, his case certainly furnishes a most striking instance, as of the force of human depravity, so also of the long-suffering and tender mercy of our God. I believe he is still living at Stoke Goldington.

“ After Mr. Newton had left Olney about a year, his predictions concerning his successor were amply verified: for having embroiled himself with the parishioners, and acted in such a manner as to incur public rebuke from the archdeacon at the visitation, the curate, at length, in a pettish letter to the Earl of Dartmouth, patron of the living, threatened to relinquish his charge. He probably did not mean to be taken at his word; but his Lordship, communicating with the vicar, his implied resignation of the curacy was admitted, and a deputation, including some of the persons who before opposed my succeeding Mr. Newton, was sent to me, earnestly requesting me to accept the vacant situation. I felt great

reluctance to comply, hesitated for some time, and went to London to consult those ministers with whom I had any acquaintance. They all considered it as my duty to accede to the proposal; which I accordingly did. But, as soon as the late curate of Olney knew that I was appointed, and had in consequence resigned Ravenstone, he applied to the vicar, and was accepted as my successor there! Had I foreseen this, I should not have consented to remove to Olney: for I knew that he had still many admirers in that place, and I was at first full of sad apprehensions as to the effect of his smooth and soothing doctrines on my Ravenstone people. But I could now do no more than pray, *Lord, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!*—for I considered a more sagacious opposer than the visible one, as the author of this measure. A temporary confusion and vexation, almost beyond description, ensued: but it was not long before all terminated creditably and comfortably.

“The curacy of Olney was only 30*l.* a year and a house, with rather better surplice fees than at Ravenstone. For that curacy I had received 40*l.* a year, and some assistance which I could not expect to retain; and, as before observed, I lived rent-free at Weston: so that the change which I now made was not, in the first instance, to my secular advantage. The people of Olney, however, had been accustomed to raise a subscription for Mr. Newton, without any solicitation; and the managing persons promised to do the same for me. But discontent soon arose: the leading characters did not act: others did not come forward: and I was decidedly averse to soliciting any party: so that for a year and a half I received less

than my former income. I was often greatly straitened, and sometimes discouraged: but I persevered in every service at the church to which the people had been accustomed, and which was practicable, though it was much more than could be demanded. In particular, I continued the weekday lecture, though very poorly attended.

“ And here I would mention, that, after I decidedly embraced my present views of the gospel, and of the Christian ministry, I constantly preached two weekday lectures, one in each of my parishes, without any remuneration. My congregations were small, but very select: at Ravenstone, on an average, not more than forty; afterwards at Olney (though that town contained about two thousand five hundred inhabitants,) seldom above fifty or sixty; and at Weston often under thirty. Yet I have reason to think that these services were specially blessed to others, and they were peculiarly comfortable to my own soul. Most of my few hearers I considered as my children; and I gave them, with much feeling and affection, many very particular instructions, cautions, and admonitions, which I could hardly have introduced into addresses to more general congregations, and for which the one, or perhaps two sermons on the Lord’s day did not allow sufficient time. Were I now situate in a village or neighbourhood, in which twenty or thirty people would probably attend, I certainly should preach a constant weekday lecture, even to so small a company.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, I think, many pious ministers, esteeming it hardly worth while to preach to a few, forget

<sup>1</sup> In fact, my father did so at Aston during a great part of the year.

the *ἐνκαιρῶς ἀκαιρῶς*, of the apostle,<sup>1</sup> and lose a most important opportunity of *edifying* their little flock *in their most holy faith*. They *preach the gospel*, on the Sunday, at large; but they do not attend to our Saviour's words, *teaching them* (their converts) *to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*.

“Notwithstanding difficulties, I, in one way or other, supported my credit at Olney. But I was here surrounded with numerous and most distressed poor persons, for whom Mr. Newton's more abundant resources, derived from affluent friends, had enabled him to do considerable things:<sup>2</sup> and this added to my embarrassment. They were sensible, however, of my different situation, and I must say expressed satisfaction and thankfulness for the far more scanty aid which I could afford them.

“After I had been at Olney about a year and a half, Lady Austen, having come to visit her sister, who was married to the Rev. Mr. Jones, curate of the adjacent village of Clifton, proposed to take my first floor, and some other accommodation which I could conveniently spare: and she accordingly became an inmate at the vicarage. This added 10*l.* a year to my income, and saved me some expenses.”

<sup>1</sup> “In season, out of season.” 2 Tim. iv. 2.

<sup>2</sup> “Be hospitable, said Mr. Thornton, and keep an open house for such as are worthy of entertainment: help the poor and needy: I will stately allow you 200*l.* a year, and readily send whatever you have occasion to draw for more.—Mr. N. told me, that he thought he had received of Mr. Thornton upwards of 3000*l.* in this way, during the time he resided at Olney.”—Life of Newton, by Cecil.

It appears from Cowper's letters, as published by Mr. Hayley, that Lady Austen entered upon her lodgings at the vicarage in the autumn of 1782, soon after the birth of my father's fifth child. This child, a son, lived only six months. It was born with a mark upon the face, extending over one eye, which turned to a sore, and "after several distressing weeks" ended in mortification. Its death I find thus announced by Mr. Cowper, writing to Mr. Newton, February 8, 1783. "Mr. S—'s last child is dead. It lived a little while in a world of which it knew nothing, and is gone to another in which it is already become wiser than the wisest it has left behind. The earth is a grain of sand, but the interests of man are commensurate with the heavens."<sup>1</sup>—My father says of it, writing to a friend, "He was a great sufferer, and we had in him a great and needful trial; but the issue was mercy. We have, I trust, three in heaven, and have cause for thankfulness."

I find from the letter just quoted, that, soon after this event, my father visited his relations in Lincolnshire, and derived much satisfaction from his journey. "I found my friends more cordial, and more disposed to give me a patient hearing than I expected, and some of them treading the ways of the Lord; others somewhat hopeful. I had a door of utterance opened unto me beyond expectation, and returned home full of sanguine hopes that some good would be done by my journey. This, it seems, was more than my poor foolish heart could bear: there

<sup>1</sup> Vol. III. Let. 69.



needed some bitter to counteract all this sweet. Therefore, my wise and kind physician, (having in mercy brought me home first,) immediately discerning the danger, applied the remedy: and I am very base if I do not heartily thank him for it." This remedy was a severe attack of his asthmatic complaint, "with several relapses."

He proceeds in his narrative: "After Lady Austen had been with me for a short time, she learned the circumstances respecting the subscription promised, but not raised for me: and she found that several of the inhabitants were disposed cheerfully to contribute, if any one would collect their contributions. In consequence, she herself, together with her brother in law, Mr. Jones, without my solicitation or knowledge, undertook to set the business forward. And from this time a regular subscription was raised, small indeed in itself, and compared with what it had formerly been, but sufficient to be a great relief to me, and to lay me under obligations, which, I fear, I never was able to compensate in the manner most agreeable to my desires and prayers.

"In the vicarage house at Olney, during Lady Austen's residence there, most of those events, which are recorded in the life of Cowper, as pertaining to this period, occurred. Here 'the Task' was imposed and undertaken. Here 'John Gilpin' was told as a story, in prose, and the plan formed of giving it circulation in verse. Some things in the published account are not very accurately stated, as I know, who saw the springs which moved the machine, and which could not be seen by a more distant spectator, or mere visitant. After some time the cordiality be-

tween Mrs. Unwin and Mr. Cowper, on the one part, and Lady Austen, on the other, was interrupted; and my lodger suddenly left me, to my no small regret."— This was about Midsummer, 1784.

During Lady A.'s continuance at Olney, Mr. Hayley observes, the three friends "might be almost said to make one family, as it became their custom to dine always together, alternately in the houses of the two ladies:" and it was in order to facilitate this constant intercourse, that a door was opened in the vicarage garden wall towards the back of Mr. Cowper's premises.

"About a year before Lady Austen left me," my father says, "I was induced to receive into my family a young lady from London, of the name of Gines, afterwards married to John Barber, Esq. This proved, I trust, an important event, in the best sense, to her, and through her to her family; as well as eventually to myself. She continued with me about two years, till my removal to London, and during the latter part of the time she was joined by her younger sister, subsequently the wife of the late Rev. Stephen Langston, Rector of Little Horwood, Bucks.

"When I had published the Force of Truth, I had never attended to any controversies concerning church government, or any kindred subjects. I found myself a minister of the establishment; and, as I saw no sufficient reason to relinquish my station, I was satisfied that it was my duty to retain it. But, soon after, the controversy concerning baptism," whether it should be administered to infants, or only to adults professing faith, "fell in my way; and, for some time, I was almost ready to conclude, that the anti-

pædobaptists were right. This gave me great uneasiness: not because I was solicitous whether, in the search after truth, I were led among them or elsewhere; but because I feared being misled; and deprecated following my publication with a further and *needless* change, which might bring discredit upon it. Many, very many prayers, accompanied with tears, did I pour out on this subject. I read books on both sides of the question, but received no satisfaction. I became even afraid of administering baptism or the Lord's supper. But I said to myself, '*He that believeth shall not make haste*: I must retain my station, till I have taken time to examine the subject fully: and I must in the mean time do what retaining that station requires.' It is remarkable that, in this instance alone, my wife appeared greatly distressed, in the prospect of my changing my sentiments.—At length I laid aside all controversial writings, and determined to seek satisfaction on this question, as I had on others, by searching the scriptures and prayer. I was no less time than three quarters of a year engaged in this investigation, before I came to a conclusion: but I was then so fully satisfied that the infant children of believers, and of all who make a credible profession of faith, are the proper subjects of baptism, that I have never since been much troubled about it.

“This was my conclusion, especially from the identity of the covenant made with Abraham, and that still made with believers; and from circumcision being the sacrament of regeneration under the old dispensation, as baptism is under the new, and *the seal of the righteousness of faith*.—Abraham re-

ceived this seal long after he believed; Isaac, when an infant; Ishmael, when thirteen years of age. The men of Abraham's household, and Esau, though uninterested in the promises concerning Canaan, yet, as a part of Abraham's family, and of the visible church, were circumcised by the command of God himself. The circumcision of infants was enjoined, with denunciations of wrath against those who neglected it. The apostles were Israelites, accustomed to this system. Adult gentiles were admitted among the Jews by circumcision, and their male children were circumcised also. In Christ, there is *neither male nor female*.—Had only adults been designed to be the subjects of Christian baptism, some prohibition of admitting infants would have been requisite; and we should never have read, as we do, of *households* being baptized, without any limitation or exception of this kind being intimated.—In short, unless it can be proved that circumcision was not the sign, or sacrament, of regeneration, even as baptism now is, I cannot see how the argument can be answered: and all the common objections against infant baptism, as administered to subjects incapable of the professions required and the benefits intended, bear with equal force against infant circumcision.

“The conclusion, thus drawn, rests not on this one ground alone: collateral proof was not, and is not, overlooked: but my idea always was, that not the *privilege* of the infant, but the *duty* of the parent, is the grand thing to be ascertained: and this clears away much extraneous matter from the argument.

“To the question of immersion, or sprinkling, or

pouring, I never attached any great importance. Immersion is doubtless baptism: and so is sprinkling, or pouring, according to my unvaried judgment. If a few texts seem to allude to baptism by figures taken from immersion, how many speak of *the baptism of the Holy Spirit*, under the idea of *pouring out upon us?*

“ The investigation of this controversy brought a variety of other subjects under my consideration, of which I had not before at all thought. I met with many objections to the established church, which I was not competent to answer, except by reciprocal objections to many things in use among our opponents, which I thought at least equally unscriptural. In this unsettled state of mind I was induced, by the following means, to preach irregularly.

“ On becoming curate of Olney, I was asked to undertake some annual sermons which Mr. Newton had been used to preach: and this brought me acquainted with several families, chiefly in Northampton and the neighbourhood, in which he had expounded to private companies. When I had ventured on this rather irregular service, (in which I had not before been engaged,) I was drawn on further and further, till I was led to preach frequently (always on the weekdays,) in houses and other private buildings; commonly to numerous congregations. This service was in no degree advantageous to me, in a secular point of view, but the contrary; and the state of my health, oppressed with most distressing asthma, far beyond what I have now for many years experienced, rendered it extremely self-denying. I often rode

seventy or eighty miles, and preached four or five sermons, between Monday morning and Thursday noon, (for I always returned to my weekday lectures,) while more than half the night I sat up in bed, in strange houses, unable to lie down from oppression of breath, and longing for the morning; and, on my return home, and sometimes while from home, the remedies which I was obliged to employ were of the most unpleasant nature.”

One of the painful “remedies,” to which my father’s bilious and asthmatic complaints compelled him, at this period, and for many years after, to have very frequent recourse, was strong antimonial emetics. Another may be learned from the following passage of Mr. Cowper’s letters. “Mr. S—— has been ill almost ever since you left us, and last Saturday, as on many foregoing Saturdays, was obliged to clap on a blister, by way of preparation for his Sunday labours. He cannot draw breath upon any other terms. If holy orders were always conferred upon such conditions, I question but even bishopricks themselves would want an occupant. But he is easy and cheerful.”<sup>1</sup>

My father proceeds concerning these irregular engagements: “I am not conscious that ambition was my motive, though it might intermingle: but I hope that zeal for the honour of Christ, and love to souls influenced me. I felt no consciousness of blame in what I did; nor perceived, that, in order to consistency, it was needful for me to choose one ground or the other, and to act either as a clergyman of the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. iii. Letter 81: to Rev. J. Newton, Sept. 8, 1783.

establishment, or as one who had receded from it. I had abundant proof that my irregular exertions were attended with much success: and I did not, as I have subsequently done, see much reason to doubt, whether the evident usefulness of these labours, in many individual instances, was not counterbalanced by the hindrances which such proceedings throw in the way of other ministers, and candidates for the ministry; and by the general obloquy which they entail upon the whole body of clergy, in other respects agreeing in sentiment with the persons who thus deviate from established order. This consideration, taken alone, would probably induce me, with my present views, to decline such services, even were I placed in my former circumstances: but it did not then occur to me. Gradually, however, I became more sensible of the inconsistency and impropriety of attempting to unite things in themselves discordant, and more attached to the established church: so that, after I had been a few years in London, I refused to preach irregularly, except as once in the year I consented to exchange pulpits with Mr. Hill of Surrey Chapel, that being the stipulated condition of his preaching a charity sermon for the Lock Hospital: and, when I took my present living, (before which I could not be said, after I came to London, to have any thing directly from the church,) I immediately refused to do this also, and determined no more to deviate from regularity.

“ I do not say this as blaming those who once belonged to the establishment, but have since been induced to labour in a different part of the vineyard; but merely as accounting for my own conduct; and

as bearing my decided testimony against the practice, at present not common, of holding a living and yet preaching irregularly. The reason applies, in good measure, in respect of curacies and lectureships; but not with equal force. As to those who have nothing of the kind, neither livings, lectureships, nor curacies, and who preach at one time in a licensed meeting house, or elsewhere, and in a church at another time; I would do the same, were I a dissenting minister, if I were permitted to do it. The *veto* belongs to the bishop, not the *nolo* to the preacher."

The justness of most of these observations commends them at once to our approbation. On two points, however, I am not able to discern the fairness of the distinctions made. I know of no engagements into which an incumbent enters to comply with established order, which are not also virtually made by a curate or a lecturer: nor can I readily admit, that he who holds a situation as a minister, only by virtue of his being a clergyman of the established church, can be said to "have nothing from the church," in such a sense as to be free from its rules, and from the engagements which he formed on being admitted to holy orders. It appears to me, that whoever avails himself of his *clerical character* continues under the engagements which he made in order to acquire it. Though, however, I thus venture to question the correctness of my father's reasoning on this particular point, I am confident that it was perfectly satisfactory to his own mind, and implied in him no sort of subterfuge or evasion. Beyond all doubt he viewed things just as he here states them.

In connexion with this discussion on irregular minis-



trations, the reader may perhaps not be displeased to have placed before him what has always appeared to me a very excellent passage, on *itinerant preaching*, extracted from my father's commentary on 2 Chronicles xvii.—“Notwithstanding the prejudices of mankind, and the indiscretions of individuals, *an itinerant preacher*, if duly qualified and sent forth, is one of the most honourable and useful characters, that can be found upon earth: and there needs no other proof that, when this work is done properly and with perseverance, it forms the grand method of spreading widely, and rendering efficacious, religious knowledge, than the experience of the church in all ages: for great reformatations and revivals of religion have generally been thus effected. It is especially sanctioned by the example of Christ and his apostles, and recommended as the divine method of spreading the gospel through the nations of the earth; *itinerant preaching* having almost always preceded, and made way for, the stated ministry of *regular pastors*. But it is a work which requires peculiar talents and dispositions, and a peculiar call in providence; and is not rashly and hastily to be ventured upon by every novice, who has learned to speak about the gospel, and has more zeal, than knowledge, prudence, humility, or experience. An unblemished character, a disinterested spirit, an exemplary deadness to the world, unaffected humility, deep acquaintance with the human heart, and preparation for enduring the cross, not only with boldness, but with meekness, patience, and sweetness of temper, are indispensably necessary in such a service. They who engage in it should go upon broad scriptural grounds, and dwell

chiefly upon those grand essentials of religion, in which pious men of different persuasions are agreed; plainly proving every thing from the word of God, running nothing into extremes, and avoiding all disputes, however urged to it, about the *shibboleths* of a party. In this way itinerant preaching is a blessing which all, who love the souls of men, must wish to be vouchsafed to every part of every nation upon earth. And, if those who are in authority would employ select men of known and approved piety and ability, protected and countenanced by them, to go from city to city, and from village to village, through the kingdom, teaching in every place the plain acknowledged truths and precepts of the Bible, immense good might be done. Those stated teachers, who have been grossly negligent or profligate, must either be disgraced or reformed; others might be stirred up to use greater diligence; and the instructions of stated faithful ministers would receive an additional sanction, which could not fail of producing a happy effect.”—It may be observed that at the period of the Reformation, in the reign of Edward VI, a practice of the kind here recommended existed in our church, under the sanction of authority. Six eminent persons (of whom John Knox was one,) were appointed to go through various districts of the kingdom as preachers:<sup>1</sup> and that such an office was not continued has probably been a great loss to our church. I have heard a wise and excellent clergyman lately deceased, who was always a strict adherent to order, lament the mismanagement of things in the church of England, as compared with some other

<sup>1</sup> Burnett and Strype. See M'Crie's Life of Knox, anno 1551.

establishments. Had Whitfield and Wesley (he said,) arisen in the church of Rome, that hierarchy would have given scope to their zeal, and yet have made it conduce to the support of the church, instead of being exercised so as to estrange the people from her communion.

Before we quit this subject, I would observe, that one instance of the usefulness of my father's irregular labours, while he resided in Buckinghamshire, is entitled to particular specification. It was thus announced to him by his old and valued friend the Rev. Dr. Ryland of Bristol, about a month before his last illness. "What led me to write now was a letter I received from Dr. Carey yesterday, in which he says, 'Pray give my thanks to dear Mr. Scott for his History of the Synod of Dort. I would write to him if I could command time. If there be any thing of the work of God in my soul, I owe much of it to his preaching, when I first set out in the ways of the Lord.'" And the following is my father's reply in his last letter to Dr. R., dated Feb. 15, 1821. "I am surprised as well as gratified at your message from Dr. Carey. He heard me preach only a few times, and that as far as I know, in my rather irregular excursions: though I often conversed and prayed in his presence, and endeavoured to answer his sensible and pertinent inquiries, when at Hackleton. But to have suggested even a single useful hint to such a mind as his, may be considered as a high privilege, and matter of gratitude. Send my kindest remembrance to him when you write."

It can hardly be necessary to observe, that the person referred to is the distinguished baptist mission-

ary in Bengal, who is perhaps better entitled than any other individual to the praise of having given the *first impulse* to the extraordinary exertions of the present age, for the propagation of Christianity in the world. I well remember the late Rev. Andrew Fuller reporting, at my father's house, in the year 1792, the impression which had been made upon an association meeting of his own denomination, by Mr. Carey's sermon, on the address to the church, (Isaiah liv. 2.) *Lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes*; from which he pressed the two propositions that we should *expect* great things, and *attempt* great things, Hence originated the Baptist Missionary Society. The London Missionary Society followed; then the Church Missionary Society; then the Bible Society; and, in succession, various other institutions, all, we trust, destined to contribute their share to that great and blessed consummation,

“By prophecy's unerring finger mark'd  
To faith's strong eye.”

“During this term of my life,” my father proceeds, “I was called on, in consequence of its being impracticable for the Rev. Henry Venn and the Rev. Thomas Robinson to perform a service designed for one of them, to preach a funeral sermon at Creaton, in Northamptonshire, for the Rev. Mr. Maddox, who had laboured there very usefully for several years. The day was very wet, and I rode twenty miles in a heavy rain to the service, and the same in returning from it: yet during the time of service it was fair. The concourse of people was very great, and the church very small. I ventured to go into the church-yard, where I preached to at least two thousand five

hundred persons. The congregation was attentive to a degree seldom witnessed: and for twenty years after the effects of that sermon were not forgotten, even if they now are. On the following Sunday, I preached twice in the same churchyard to nearly as large congregations: but I never, on any other occasion preached in the open air.

“ In this connexion an incident may be introduced which occurred at an early period, but my part in which only now became known, in one of my excursions into Northamptonshire.

“ As far back as the year 1776, the Northampton newspaper, during several successive weeks, contained sharp disputatious papers between two parties of the independent dissenters, belonging to the meeting of which Dr. Doddridge had formerly been minister. I felt much displeas'd with the spirit manifested in these papers; and I wrote (under what signature I do not now remember,) a letter showing the bad tendency of such discussions in a public print, and of these mutual criminations of persons *professing godliness*; concluding with the apostle's words, “ *If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*” (Gal. v. 15.) The consequence was, that in the next newspaper both parties entreated the writer to come forward, and be the umpire of their differences! Little did they think how incompetent he was for such an arduous office, or suspect his youth and inexperience.—I took no notice of this proposal: but the publisher of the paper declared his purpose of inserting no more on the subject. The dispute was so far quashed: and, though many conjectures were formed, the writer of the

letter was never known till some time after I had removed to Olney. Being then at Northampton, where I lectured in a private family, I in the course of conversation told some of the principal persons that I had written the letter; and had the satisfaction to hear them allow, that it had indeed proved *a word in season.*”

In the summer 1783, while curate of Olney, my father made a visit to Shropshire, in company with his highly esteemed friend the Rev. John Mayor, Vicar of Shawbury near Shrewsbury; and was there confined with a very dangerous illness of some weeks' continuance. As an extract of a letter from Mr. Mayor, written since my father's death, records this event, so distressing at the time to his absent family, and will also serve as an introduction to some letters which are to follow, I shall here insert it.

“ My first acquaintance with your father was, when Mr. Charles of Bala and I were undergraduates, and spent our long vacation at Olney, soon after Mr. Newton's acquaintance commenced with him. I paid my first visit to him the beginning of September, 1782, when greatly disturbed with scruples about baptizing the children of the openly profane. His integrity in declining preferment some years before, from scruples respecting the Athanasian creed, induced me to take a journey of a hundred miles to consult him, when travelling was very painful to me. Before I could open my distress on account of baptizing, I was led by the assertions of Mr. R — to say somewhat on the mistakes which many in my neighbourhood, called Calvinists, ran into, respecting points supposed to be Calvin's doctrine, which were

attended with the worst effects on their tempers and conduct. Sin was considered by them as a pitiable infirmity, rather than as deserving wrath and condemnation. The character of God was clouded; and the glory of redemption, and the dispensation we are under by the gospel, not acknowledged to the comfort of returning sinners. This led into many discussions afterwards, which made your father say, that he thought my scruples about baptism were permitted, to bring us together for the purpose of opening our minds to each other on subjects which required explanation. I had my scruples removed by a single sentence. Your father said, ‘the right of children to baptism is not their parents’ faith, but the profession of it, so far as to bring them to the ordinance.’ Archbishop Leighton was of the same mind.—Mr. Scott returned with me, after a second visit to Olney, in the summer of 1783. He was not well soon after we left Olney; and, before we reached Shiffnal, he was obliged to lie down at a little ale-house, while I sent for a chaise, and thus conveyed him to Shiffnal, and thence to Shawbury. His life was despaired of: but it pleased God to bless the physician’s prescriptions, and, after almost a month’s illness, he rapidly acquired strength, and preached for me the last Sunday twice, if not three times. I drove him back in my gig to Olney, recovering strength every step of his journey. He had given me directions to make his will, and intended to leave me executor, to print such of his papers as I should think adviseable: a great honour, which I bless God I was relieved from enjoying by the happy turn given to the state of his health. I rejoice in the

many useful years he since spent upon earth, to the edification of his own, and, I trust, of future generations. I paid him several other visits at Olney, in one of which I buried, at Weston, an infant child of his, a few months old. I missed hardly any opportunity of paying my respects to him at London, and at Aston Sandford. I always highly respected his understanding, as of the first order: his humility in searching for, and readiness in receiving truth from such as were far inferior to him in every thing: his great sincerity, prudence, and uniform zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. He was cheerful, with gravity: and never seemed to lose sight of the great business of life, to glorify God, and edify his brethren, and all about him."

At Olney my father published a Thanksgiving Sermon on the close of the American war, preached July 29, 1784; and, about nine months afterwards, his Discourse on Repentance. Of the latter he thus speaks in his narrative.

"The Discourse on Repentance was first preached as a sermon to a very small congregation at Olney, and afterwards to a very large congregation (irregularly) at Paulerspury, in Northamptonshire, where it produced permanent effects in several instances. I then wrote and enlarged it for the press, commonly with a child on my knee, or rocking the cradle, and my wife working by me: for a study and a separate fire were more than my purse would allow. I augured much usefulness from this work, as did my wife also, far more than from the Force of Truth: yet, having printed seven hundred and fifty copies,



and given away at least a hundred, I do not think the rest of the impression would ever have been sold, had I continued at Olney. Even of the Force of Truth, ten years elapsed before the first edition, consisting of a thousand copies, was disposed of; though now nearly that number is usually sold in a year.<sup>1</sup> But several persons, who expressed much approbation of that work, decidedly opposed the Discourse on Repentance.—So discouraging a beginning had my labours from the press!”

<sup>1</sup> Six thousand copies of a cheap edition have been sold within the last six months.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CORRESPONDENCE DURING THE PERIOD OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

SUCH is the narrative which my father has left of the principal occurrences during his residence at Olney. I shall now present extracts of his correspondence which may illustrate the course of events, or the progress of his mind, at that period.

Olney, it will readily be conceived from facts which have already met the reader's eye, notwithstanding its having been favoured with the residence and labours of Mr. Newton during sixteen years, was by no means, when my father removed to it, a very inviting scene of ministerial service. Indeed the temper manifested, when a successor was to be appointed to Mr. N., cannot fail to surprise and offend us; and ought certainly, as my father intimates, to be borne in mind when his ministry there is under consideration. Olney, at that period, was a much divided place: the people were full of religious notions,—of that “knowledge which puffeth up,”—while the “love that edifieth” was comparatively rare. There were, no doubt, many excellent Christian characters among them; but, in general, the religion of the place was far from being of a sufficiently practical character: and it cannot be doubted, that the exquisite candour and tenderness of Mr. N.'s temper had failed of adequately counteracting

the existing tendency of things. Many indeed were nursed up to a morbid delicacy of feeling, which could not bear the faithful application of scriptural admonitions, even by his gentle hand, without expostulation and complaint.

There is the less need to scruple this statement, because I trust, and it was my father's hope and belief, that the religious state of Olney is materially amended; and that that town, in some degree, exhibits the rare example of a Christian community considerably recovered from a corrupt state, contracted by the abuse of the best principles.—The statement also seems due to the subject of these memoirs, and it will receive confirmation from what is now to follow.

Of my father's first *proposed* removal to Olney, I find only the following brief notice, in a letter to his younger sister, dated Weston, Sept. 28, 1779. "I have some thoughts of removing from this place to Olney. It will not be a very important advantage in worldly things; but it will bring an additional care upon me of near two thousand souls. But the Lord will provide."

In less than a month after this, the burst of opposition had taken place at Olney, and had produced its effect in disconcerting Mr. Newton's plan, as appears from a letter of his to my father, of the 19th of October. He says, "I am grieved as often as I think of the strange hasty spirit that discovered itself among my poor people, and which I fear has deprived them of the comfort and benefit I am persuaded they would have received from your ministry . . . . . I could not foresee what happened: my disappoint-

ment and concern have been great, but I cannot help it." The mortification of this excellent man was not yet, however, at its height; for the person whom his people actually pitched upon to succeed him was not yet in view, or at least was not known to him: for he forms other plans for them.—He concludes his letter in that strain of pious confidence in God which so much distinguished him. "What a satisfaction it is to know, that all things are at the Lord's disposal, and under his management; and that, in a way beyond our apprehension, he can and will overrule them for good. I can hardly now conjecture how I once lived, when I lived without God in the world. I was then in the situation of a ship at sea, exposed to storms, surrounded with rocks and quicksands, and without either pilot, rudder, or compass. Yet I was so stupid that I apprehended no danger. But surely, with the views I now have of human life, I should be quite miserable, should soon sink under the pressure of care and anxiety, if I were not invited, and in some measure enabled, to commit my ways and concerns to the Lord, who has promised to care for me.—I rejoice in the assurance, that he is and will be *your* guard and comforter. My heart wishes you much peace and great success in his service. He is a good master, and his service, though not exempt from trials, is honourable and pleasant. So you find it: may you go on from strength to strength!"

Another letter from the same hand, dated July 27, 1780, implies a return in some of the people of Olney to a better mind. "I am glad you have opportunity of preaching sometimes at Olney. I hear more and more from thence of the concern many feel for the

share they had in preventing your living among them. I hope the Lord will sanctify the present growing inconveniences which they complain of, to humble and prove them, to show them what is in their hearts, and to prepare them for a due improvement of a better supply hereafter."

This letter also contains the first allusion that I find to my father's visits to Leicester, where he contracted an intimate friendship with the late Rev. Thomas Robinson, and which town afterwards became to him a favourite place of resort. "I have lately had a visit," Mr. N. says, "from Mr. Ludlam, who brought me a letter from Mr. Robinson: so that I have heard of your visit to Leicester from others, as well as from yourself. I trust the Lord whom you serve is and will be with you, stately and occasionally, abroad and at home."

I persuade myself that I shall meet with ready indulgence for introducing still further extracts from the letters of this justly beloved character, whose epistolary excellence is also generally acknowledged. February 17, 1781, after my father had accepted the curacy of Olney, Mr. N. writes: "Had the curacy of Ravenstone been at my disposal, I should not have given it to Mr. ——. But such is the Lord's pleasure, and therefore it must be right. We agreed that Mr. — had done" (occasioned) "some good at Olney. We shall find he will be useful in the same way at Ravenstone. . . . We are shortsighted, but the Lord sees things in all their consequences, and has views worthy of his wisdom, of which we are not aware. How often should we spoil his perfect plan were we able: but it is our mercy, no less than his

right, that he *will do ALL his pleasure*. Stand still and wait, and you shall at length admire the propriety of his management in all things. What can we desire better than an infallible guidance? . . . In my Letters to a Nobleman you have descriptions of my heart's feelings and exercises, to which I can add little new. I am kept, but surely it is *by the power of God*. Φρουρουμένος (1 Pet. i. 5.) is an emphatical word: it well expresses our situation. We are like a besieged city: the gates of hell, the powers of darkness, encompass us on every side; but we are guarded, *garrisoned* by the power of God. The name of the besieged city is, *The Lord is there*. Our defence and our supplies are from on high, and therefore cannot be intercepted. Our enemies may, they will fight, but they cannot prevail. The captain of our salvation knows all their plots, despises all their strength, can disconcert and discomfit them, and, whenever he pleases, compel them to raise the siege in a moment. We have a good promise, Isa. xxviii. 5, 6. So likewise the whole of Psalm xlvi. . . . I am daily with you in spirit: your comfort and your success are near my heart, and I am doubly interested in you, as we are both connected with Olney. . . . The season of the year, as well as more important reasons, puts Horace's words often into my mouth, *O rus, quando te aspiciam?* It must not be yet, but I hope the day will come, when we shall resume our walks, and revisit our favourite trees."

The following is characteristic of the writer, and at the same time conveys the information, which my father's narrative has not given, that, on his resignation of the curacy of Ravenstone, unsuccessful at-

tempts were made to deprive him of that of Weston also.

“ March 31, 1781. My dear friend, I had written to you and my letter was going off, when your's came, and made mine unnecessary, by what you yourself said of the subjects I had in view. I then thought I would wait till I could congratulate you and Mrs. Scott and myself on your removal to Olney, which I hope I may now do. May the good, the great Shepherd dwell with you, (be your *glory* and *defence*,) in your heart, house, and assemblies! I have been much with you in spirit of late. My love to you, if you were in another place, and to the people of Olney, if they had another minister, would singly excite my attention and best wishes: at present these motives are united, and strengthen each other.

“ Methinks I see you sitting in my old corner in the study.—I will warn you of one thing. That room (do not start) used to be haunted. I cannot say I ever saw or heard any thing with my bodily organs, but I have been sure there were evil spirits in it, and very near me: a spirit of folly, a spirit of indolence, a spirit of unbelief, and many others; indeed *their name is Legion*. But why should I say they are in your study, when they followed me to London, and still pester me here? I shall be glad, however, if your house be fairly rid of them. I am sure they were there once. I hope, likewise, you will have better company when you are there alone, more frequently than I had. I hope the Lord has sometimes favoured it with his gracious presence. I hope, if the walls have been witnesses of my com-

plaints and shame, they have been likewise to my attempts to praise Him, and to many prayers which I have offered up for my successor, long before I knew who he was to be. May all, and more than all that I ever besought him for myself, be vouchsafed to you, and the blessings I have entreated for the people be afforded to them under your ministry!

“ I understand the designs of those who would have deprived you of Weston have been defeated. It is therefore the Lord’s pleasure you should keep it for the present. In this view I ought to be, and am glad of it, as I know it was much upon your heart. Yet, had he appointed otherwise, I should not have been so sorry, as you would probably have been at the first. However expedient and apparently necessary your serving Weston may seem, it may, perhaps, be the chief cause of inconvenience to you at Olney. When you are absent from home, the people will be under a continual temptation of mixing with those, who will do all in their power to prejudice them against you, at least against the church. Such a spirit I know is very prevalent. . . . It is possible likewise that the Weston people may not always be content with one service a day. But I know your views and motives are such as the Lord will bless. To day is ours: what is matter of future duty, He will make known in his time. I cannot doubt but your labours at Olney will be welcome and acceptable to the best of his people, and I cannot but hope he will raise you up a new people there, and cause you to rejoice in some over whom I have often mourned. You desired to follow his leading, and I cannot believe he



would have led you where you are, if he had not something important for you to do. Be of good courage, wait patiently his leisure, and he will give you the desire of your heart.

“ My mouth waters to come to you : but it cannot be till some time (I know not how long) after Easter. . . . But all these things are in the Lord’s hand. When I see the cloud taken up from the tabernacle, I shall be glad to move ; otherwise I dare not. I am so blind to consequences that I tremble at the thoughts of forming a plan for myself. Your prayers will be among the means to help me forward. . . . A thousand *ifs* may be suggested, but they are all in the Lord’s hand ; and therefore *if* it be his will that I should visit you, nothing shall prevent it. If he sees it not expedient or proper, he will not send an angel to tell me so, but he will tell me by his providence. If he wills me to stay here, why should I wish to be somewhere else? If we were not prone to prefer our own will to his, we should never complain of a disappointment. This is the lesson I want to learn. I am so much at teaching it to others, that it might be supposed I had acquired it myself. But the Lord and my own heart know how far I am from having attained.

“ My love to your new people : I have not room to particularize names, but I love them all. Believe me, your affectionate friend,

JOHN NEWTON.”

I have one more letter of Mr. Newton’s to insert, and I shall introduce it here, though rather by anticipation. It is dated March 15, 1782. I think no reader would wish it omitted.

“ This morning I have hope of indulging myself in half an hour’s *pen-chat*, with my dear friend Mr. Scott; a pleasure I could not have sooner, though the receipt of your’s made me desirous of writing. I thought I had reserved time last Saturday, but unexpected company came in and ran away with it; and this is often the case.

“ I should have liked to be with you at Leicester. I love the place, the sheep and the shepherd of that fold, and I love the friends and ministers you met there. I am glad you had pleasure and profit in your excursion. I can guess that the contrast you felt on your return was painful: for I likewise have been at Olney, and have preached once and again, when the congregation has reminded me of the scattered ships <sup>1</sup> of Æneas which survived the storm,

—*rari nantes in gurgite vasto.*

I likewise have preached at Leicester and Olney in the same week, and been conscious of the difference both in numbers and attention. I can assure you that, though I put the best face upon things, and was upon the whole comfortable, yet my chief comfort in my situation there latterly, sprang from a persuasion that I was in the post the Lord had assigned me; that he knew I was there, and why I was there; that, as a centinel, it would be unsoldierly to indulge a wish of being relieved sooner than my commander appointed. I thought, so far as my concern was dictated by a regard to the honour of the gospel and the good of souls, it was right; but it was the

<sup>1</sup> The classical reader will excuse a slight inaccuracy here.

smallest part which I durst assign simply to that cause; and that all the uneasy feelings of Mr. Self, on his own account, were not of that importance which he pretended. There were a few who loved me for the Lord's sake, and who, I could perceive, were fed and brought forward by my ministry; and, though they were but few, I durst not say that their edification and affection were not an over-recompense for all the disagreeables.—Such considerations as these are present with you likewise. The Lord will support you and comfort you, and can, whenever he pleases, either make your service more pleasant at Olney, or assign you a more comfortable situation elsewhere. I never had one serious thought of a removal, till the evening I received Mr. Thornton's offer of St. Mary Woolnoth. Even then, when it came to the point, it cost me something to part with them: and, had the proposal been made a year or two sooner, I should have found more difficulty in accepting it. His hour and His methods are best, and it is good to wait for him and upon him; for none who so wait shall be disappointed. When I first went to Olney, and for a good while afterwards, I had no more reason to expect such a post as I am now in, than I have now to expect a removal to Lambeth. But the Lord never is at a loss for means to effect his own purposes. He can provide friends, open doors, remove mountains, and bring the most unlikely things to pass. . . . And, when we have finished our course, if he is pleased to accept us, it will make no difference whether we die curates, or rectors, or bishops.

“One thing is needful: but this one thing in-

cludes many, and may be considered in various respects. The one thing for a sinner is to know Jesus and his salvation. The one thing for a believer is to live to his will, and to make him his all; to admire, contemplate, resemble, and serve him. A believer is a child of God; a minister is, in an especial and appropriate sense, a servant, though a child likewise. The one thing for a servant, or a steward in the house of God is to be faithful; that is, to be simply and without reserve, or any allowed interfering motive, devoted and resigned to his will; to have no plan, connexion, prospect, or interest, but under his direction, and in an immediate and clear subserviency to his interest. Happy the man who is brought to this point! How honourable, how safe his state! He is engaged in a league offensive and defensive with the Lord of heaven and earth: and, in the midst of changes and exercises which can but affect the surface, if I may so speak, he has an abiding peace in the bottom of his soul, well knowing whose he is, and whom he serves.

“ Indeed, my friend, I see, or think I see, such interested views, such height of spirit, such obvious blemishes, in some, who, on account of gifts and abilities, are eminent in the church of God, as are truly lamentable. I adore the mercy of the Lord who has preserved you and me, and a few men whom I love, from those snares and temptations, by which some, as good and wise as ourselves, have been entangled and hurt. If I must blame, I would do it with gentleness, well knowing that had I been left to myself, in similar circumstances, I should not have acted better. Ah! deceitful sin, deceitful

world, deceitful heart! How can we stand an hour against such a combination, unless upheld by the arm that upholds the heaven and the earth. . . .

“ I can say nothing about coming to Olney, but that I am willing if the Lord please. If I do, it must be soon after Whitsunday: a long while to look forward to! I cannot move without a supply, of which I have no present prospect: but he can provide, if he would have me go. With him I would leave all. It is pleasant, but not necessary to see each other. Oh! may we see him, and rejoice in him daily; and, as to all the rest, *Not my will, but thine be done*. So I wish to say.—With love to Mrs. Scott from us both, I remain your affectionate friend,

JOHN NEWTON.”

I now turn to my father's own letters. The following, addressed to my mother's brother in law, to his correspondence with whom we have before adverted, will show his motives for undertaking the cure of Olney, and his view of the service in which he was engaging. It is dated Weston, February 15, 1781.

“ I have undertaken the curacy of Olney along with Weston, leaving Ravenstone; which will be attended with my removal to Olney at Lady-day, and a considerable consequent expense in furniture, &c. But, on the other hand, it will I apprehend be some increase of income, and more of a settlement than my present situation; as I have good reason to believe I shall be presented to the living, when the incumbent dies. At present the curacy, taking one thing with another, is about equal to Ravenstone, or rather preferable; and there have been for many years subscriptions for a

lecture, which have amounted to 40*l.* or better, but may probably be 20*l.* or 30*l.* The living is but small, 70*l.* per annum, and the house; and the incumbent is very old. I mention these things because, as relations, you will probably wish to hear of them: otherwise, they are to me very unimportant. I have this day finished my thirty-fourth year. I lived without God in the world for nearly twenty-eight: then he did not starve me, nay, he provided well for me, though I knew him not, asked him not, thanked him not. I have now in some measure trusted, and poorly served him the other six years, or nearly, and he has not failed me. Sometimes he has proved my faith, and made me ready to question whether he would provide for me or not, at least in that plentiful manner I had been accustomed to; but he has always in the end made me ashamed of my suspicions. *Mercy and goodness have followed me all the days of my life, and the same Jehovah is still my Shepherd; therefore I shall not want.* I do not therefore embrace this offer, as if I were either dissatisfied, or distrustful, or avaricious. I trust the Lord knows these are not my motives. The advance of income (if it be any,) is not at all a leading object with me; but, the situation being offered, I verily judged it, upon the most deliberate consideration, I trust in the spirit of prayer, my bounden duty to accept it; because the vicar of Ravenstone's life is very precarious, and his death would probably have been followed with my removal to a greater distance from the place of my present abode, and from the people to whom I have been made useful, and whom I dearly love; who will now be near, within reach of me, and I of them:—

because I hope the Lord hath some good work to do by me at Olney:—and because many good people there have been this last year *as sheep not having a shepherd*. At the same time I am aware that I am about to be plunged into the midst of difficulties and trials, and shall have to regret the loss of many of my present comforts; that I shall need vastly more wisdom, patience, and meekness, than I have hitherto attained to. But he who sends me will support me, supply me, stand by me, and carry me through. And indeed I am not to expect that the Lord Jesus has enlisted me into his army, and commissioned me as an officer, and given me a complete suit of armour, and directions, and encouragement for the fight, and assurance of victory, for nothing. He bids me *endure hardships, fight the good fight*, carry war into Satan's dominion, down with his strong holds, spoil his goods; and resistance, and conflict, and wrestlings, I must expect. Now for the fight, by and by the victory, and then the conqueror's rest. He has, I trust, also enlisted you: be not discouraged at the number and rage of your enemies. Your captain 'leads you forth to conquest and a crown.' He will *cover your head in the day of battle*, heal all your wounds, renew your strength, and at last crown you *more than conqueror*.

“ Indeed Olney is, I apprehend, as difficult a charge for a minister as can well be imagined, and I greatly feel my insufficiency; but if I look to Jesus I cannot be discouraged: *his strength shall be perfected in my weakness*, and his wisdom in my foolishness. I must, however, enjoin you to pray for me: I have prayed for you long and often, and I trust the Lord has heard, and taught you to pray: now pay

me in kind. I need this return, and shall much value it.

“ Mr. ——, (the last minister of Olney,) having set Olney in a flame by his contentious behaviour, is to succeed me at Ravenstone, which is a sensible affliction to me; but the Lord knows better than I do, and there I leave it. It will probably prevent my future usefulness at Ravenstone. This Satan doubtless intends, but I hope the Lord will *turn his counsel into foolishness.*”

To the same person he wrote July 4th following: “ You desire me to inform you how I like Olney: but it is impossible. I trust the Lord is with me, and I love his presence, and the light of his countenance, which entirely reconciles me to the numerous disagreeables that otherwise I do and must expect to encounter. I am satisfied that the Lord will not leave me to be needlessly discouraged; and, further, that I shall learn many a profitable lesson from the things I meet with: and, if I acquire humility, meekness, patience, prudence, experience in this school, though it be not pleasing to the flesh, the spirit will rejoice.—As to the people, they are pretty much as I expected: rather more divided. But I cannot tell how things will issue. I have taken a farm, which is a good deal out of heart: I am breaking up the fallow ground, ploughing, and harrowing, and sowing: but what sort of a crop I shall have, harvest time will best show. Only I am sure *I shall reap in due season if I faint not.* I do not, however, repent coming.”

Indications have already appeared of the spiritual happiness which my father enjoyed after the settle-



ment of his religious views. Several passages also in the Force of Truth, and in the Discourse on Repentance, demonstrate the same state of mind. This continued for some years, but was afterwards succeeded, as by scenes of greater effort, so also by more internal conflict. He always looked back upon the seven years which followed his first cordial reception of scriptural truth, as those of greatest personal enjoyment. The following passages of letters to his younger sister, Mrs. Ford, may be added to those which contain intimations of this kind; and they, at the same time, continue the history of his intercourse with that branch of his family.

“ January 29, 1782. To see you as happy in that *peace of God which passeth understanding*, and which, through Jesus Christ, *keepeth the heart and mind*, as I feel myself, is my ardent wish, and frequent, fervent prayer. . . . On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, I am at your service; but I preach on the other evenings. . . . You may likewise depend upon it, that I will not make your continuance at Olney disagreeable by religious disputes: for the Lord has almost spoiled me for a disputant. Waiting and praying are the weapons of my warfare, which I trust will in due time prove *mighty, through God, for the pulling down of all strong holds*, which hinder Christ's entering into, *and dwelling in your heart by faith*, and *bringing every thought into captivity to obedience to himself*. . . . One expression in your letter encourages me to hope that we shall, before many more years have elapsed, be like-minded; namely, where you seem to entertain a doubt of your being right, and do offer a prayer to God to set you

right. Thus I began : in this I persevered, and do persevere, and have no more doubt, that it is God who taught me what I now believe and preach, as to the great outlines, than I have that God is faithful and hears prayer. . . . You wonder at my condemning you unheard, and think I have a worse opinion of you than you deserve. I will promise you I have not so bad an opinion of you as I have of myself. But the Bible condemns us all, moral and immoral, great sinners and little sinners, (if there be such a thing,) *that every mouth may be stopped*, Rom. iii. 19, and following. Let me beg of you to read without a comment, to meditate upon, and pray over this scripture, especially that humbling text, *For there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*. No difference : all are guilty, all condemned malefactors : all must be saved in a way of grace, by faith, through Christ."

" June 25, 1782. Two things have concurred together to render it not easy for me to write, namely, many engagements and much indisposition. . . . If the Lord be pleased to give us, (for he is the alone giver,) in the way of honest industry in some lawful calling, the necessaries and ordinary conveniencies of life, just above the pinchings of poverty, and beneath the numberless temptations of affluence, we are then the most favourable station for real happiness, so far as attainable in this world, that we can be ; and we want nothing more but a contented mind : such a contented mind as springs from a consciousness, that of all the numberless blessings we enjoy we deserve not one, having forfeited all, and our souls too by sin ;—from a consideration of the poverty, and afflic-

tions of the son of God, endured voluntarily for us ; —from faith in him, a scriptural hope that our sins are pardoned, and that we are in a state of acceptance with God ;—from peace of conscience, peace with God, submission to him, reliance on him, and realizing views of his unerring wisdom, almighty power, and faithfulness, engaged, through Jesus, to *make all work for our good* ; together with the sweets of retired communion with him in the rarely frequented walks of fervent prayer and meditation. This is all that is wanted to make us satisfied, cheerful, and comfortable ; *rejoicing in hope* of complete happiness in a better world. All beside, that our restless minds (restless unless and until they find rest in God,) can crave, could add nothing to us. . . . Riches, pleasures, diversions, the pomp and pride of life, are not only empty but ruinous ; *vanity and vexation*. The Lord grant that we may esteem them such, and despise them. True happiness consists in being like God, loving him, and being beloved of him. All the rest is but a poor attempt of miserable man to forget his misery, and to find a happiness independent of the fountain of happiness : as if men, being deprived of the light and heat of the sun, should attempt to supply the irreparable loss by fires and tapers. . . . But believe me, dear sister, it is no small matter to be such a Christian. To deny ourselves, renounce the world, crucify the flesh, and resist the devil, though pleasant to him that has once got into the scriptural method, is too great a work for the most even of professors : most put up with either a round of devotions, in a formal way, or a set of notions. But, though there is much diligence and self-denial necessary, and

though the friendship of the world, and conformity to it, must be renounced; yet the present comforts of religion (I speak from sweet experience,) amply and richly repay it. May you and your's experience the same!"

In another letter, about a year afterwards, addressed to a young woman remotely connected with him by marriage, who had spent some time in his family at Weston, and who will hereafter be repeatedly noticed as his correspondent in Northumberland, he gives counsel and encouragement on the subject to which the preceding letter leads our thoughts,—the treatment of relations not yet brought to that religious state of mind which we could wish. At the same time we may trace in it the germ of that spirit of intercessory prayer, which so much distinguished the writer to the end of his days.

“We seldom, or never, have to repent of doing any thing which we have well prayed over, and then acted according to the best of our judgment.—I have been but little at home, and then have been very poorly in health, since I received yours: so that you must excuse my delay in writing. I do not quite forget you and your concerns when at the throne of grace, though I cannot say with Paul, *always in every prayer*. This is one among many things in this blessed apostle which I admire, that, amidst his manifold and important employments, he seems scarcely ever to have forgotten any of his churches or friends, but to have been constant, fervent, and particular in his prayers for them all and every one. The Lord help me to imitate him!—I can sympathize with you in your sorrow, but can give you no other

advice or comfort, than what you already know. The Lord is sovereign and owes us nothing: and therefore we have abundant cause for thankfulness for what he hath, in a distinguishing manner, done for us, but none to complain of what he denies us. *Be still, and know that I am God*, is a lesson which all his people must learn experimentally. *Wait the Lord's time*, is another of the same sort. To love Christ even more than father and mother, and to desire his glory even more than their welfare, (which yet it is a duty to desire next of all,) is another very hard lesson which a true Christian must learn. But, when you have made proficiency a little in these lessons, you do not know what He who is *rich in mercy*, in answer to patient, persevering, believing, submissive prayers, may do for you. At all events you know he does hear prayer, and I dare venture to say, that your most earnest, importunate prayers for your parents are as sweet music in his ears; and that he delights to hear them as offered through the intercession of Jesus. I lament much that there is so little of this spirit amongst professors of religion. If ever it become general, religion will spread in families and neighbourhoods, as fire in a sheaf. *Where two agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them*. Try the experiment. . . . Though it is very proper to drop a word now and then, yet I would advise you to be sparing in it, as it will be misconstrued into assuming and preaching. Meekness, attention, affection, and every expression of honour and respect; a mixture of seriousness and cheerfulness; (which be sure you aim at—nothing prejudices more than an appearance

of melancholy;) now and then a pertinent text of scripture; a hint dropped, and opportunities watched, when people are more willing to hear than at other times: this, accompanied with many prayers, is the line I would mark out. But *the Lord giveth wisdom*; and I doubt not he has been beforehand with me. I must conclude with wishing you *success in the name of the Lord.*”

The following letters take a wider range. Besides explaining more fully the nature of his situation at Olney, they develop the views which he had now begun to take of the state of religious profession at that time, among many persons of the class frequently denominated evangelical; which views influenced the whole of his future ministry. Incidentally also they disclose the sort of sentiments which he had formed, and to which for substance he ever adhered, on church government, and some other subjects.

The first (dated April 29, 1783,) is to the Rev. Mr. Mayor, who has been already introduced to the reader.

“ My very dear friend. . . . I would desire to bless God for, and to rejoice in the grace given unto you, and that he hath given you those peculiar views of the great things of the gospel, which alone can effectually prevent the abuse of them, and accomplish that glorious purpose for which they are designed. The moral excellency and beauty of divine things—the glory and loveliness of the divine nature, law, and gospel—spiritually discerned, are the grand preservative against every error and every abuse in re-

ligion. This God hath given you, and given you to understand the use that is to be made of it, not only for the sanctifying and comforting of your own soul, but likewise for the work of the ministry. For this I bless God; and especially because in this day there is great need of it, and few I fear have a proper sense of it. Sure I am that evangelical religion is in many places wofully verging to antinomianism,—one of the vilest heresies that ever Satan invented: our natural pride and carnality being both humoured and fed by it, under the plausible pretence of exalting free grace, and debasing human nature. But, whilst antinomians talk of the grace of the gospel, they overturn all revealed religion.”—He here proceeds to argue that there can be no more *grace* in the gospel than there is *equity* in the law, and *justice* in its penalty; that the whole scheme, which derogates from the honour of the divine law, cherishes the propensity of our corrupt nature to excuse self, extenuate sin, and cast blame upon God; and that “the *conversion* of the antinomian, notwithstanding all his good feelings, only leaves him tenfold more a hater of the God of the Bible, than he was before. ‘This, my friend,’ he proceeds, “I am sure of, and see more and more clearly every day: and the enmity of loose professors against searching practical preaching, is full proof of it: and by God’s grace I purpose to spend my whole life in bearing testimony against it; and shall rejoice in having you for a helper. In this work we must expect no quarter, either from the world, or some kind of professors. But we need wisdom equally with zeal and boldness. Let us observe that some excellent men, far before us in every other respect, have been unintentionally betrayed into some mistakes of

this kind; that therefore a religion bordering on antinomianism has the countenance of respectable names: strong prejudices are in most places in favour of it: many hypocrites, I doubt not, there are amongst those who are for it; but they are not all hypocrites. We are poor inconsistent creatures, and few see the consequences of their own sentiments. You and I are young, obscure, little, nothing, in comparison of those who have lent their names to the opposite side. We must not therefore call them masters; nor must we conceal our sentiments, or shun *to declare the whole counsel of God. The wisdom that is from above is FIRST pure, THEN peaceable.* We have therefore need of this wisdom: let us *ask it of God.* I would recommend it to you, and to myself, whilst we guard against one extreme, to be careful lest we be pushed by Satan into the other. If we are faithful, we shall be called self-willed, self-important, obstinate. The clamour we may contemn: but let us watch and pray against the thing itself. They will say, we speak and act in our own spirit: let us beg of God continually that they may have no just reason to say so. They will say we are legal: but let us, by preaching Christ, and dwelling clearly and fully on the glorious scheme of free redemption, and its peculiar doctrines, improving them to practical purposes, confute them. They will say that our ‘scrupulosity’ in practice springs from self-righteousness, and a pharisaical spirit. Let us then carefully avoid extremes; laying too much stress on little things; and censoriousness: condemning false practices mainly by our conduct.—I am persuaded God intends to do something for his glory by you, by and by. Satan hath tried to preclude your usefulness,



by taking advantage of your zeal and honesty to hurry you into extremes and indiscretions. The minds of many are prejudiced. It is your trial, and I hope you will be the better for it: but watch and pray for the time to come. For my part I make no scruple of declaring my sentiments to all I am acquainted with concerning you, and I doubt not but matters will be otherwise, if you do but observe such short rules as these. 1. Do nothing in haste. Pray, pray, pray, before you determine. 2. Avoid all extremes. 3. Be not *peculiar* in any thing which is not a case of conscience. 4. Leave outward reformation mainly to the magistrate. Your *weapons are not carnal*. 5. Remember that Satan's kingdom is too strong for an arm of flesh: keep your dependence on the Almighty. 6. Study to improve not only in grace and knowledge, but in gifts. Cultivate deliberate, audible, methodical utterance. Preach as you read prayers. Lastly: Though no part of truth is to be kept back, yet, some being of greater importance, and other of less, dwell mainly on the greater, and only mention the other occasionally.—*Verbum sapienti*.—I take the liberty of a friend; use the same with me. . . . Write sooner and longer than before; and, if you have any remaining scruples about the church, do open your mind to me. Satan would, I think, wish you to leave your station. . . .

Your friend and brother, T. SCOTT."

As this letter presents only a specimen of those complaints, which we shall see frequently repeated in the course of the present work, of a prevailing tendency to antinomian abuse of the gospel, among numbers who held many of the doctrines for which my father con-

tended, it may be expedient here to offer a remark or two upon that subject.—Be it then ever remembered, that, when my father complained of antinomianism existing among persons of this description, he by no means intended that it was found only, or even principally among them. On this subject he speaks, in a manner that well deserves attention; in the preface to his Sermon on the doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance: “On the other hand,” he says, “the Arminian is not at all secured from antinomianism, nor the Calvinist exposed to it by their several tenets: seeing both of them are antinomian just as far as they are unsanctified, and no further; *because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is NOT SUBJECT TO THE LAW of God, neither indeed can it be.* Perhaps *speculating* antinomians abound most among professed Calvinists: but antinomians, whose sentiments influence their *practice*, are innumerable among Arminians. Does the reader doubt this? Let him ask any of those multitudes who trample on God’s commandments, what they think of predestination and election; and he will speedily be convinced that it is undeniably true: for all these in various ways, take occasion from the mercy of God to encourage themselves in impenitent wickedness. It would therefore be unspeakably better for all parties to examine these subjects with impartiality, meekness, and brotherly love, than reciprocally to censure, despise, and condemn one another.”—In short, my father’s complaint was not that persons embracing these doctrines were *worse* than others, but that many of them were found by no means *so much better* than others, as he was convinced their principles ought to have made them.

—Again, the following extract of a letter written at a subsequent period, may explain what were the nature and the source of much of that leaning to antinomianism, which is complained of. It is traced rather to partial and defective views, than to express design:—"Many preachers are not directly antinomian in doctrine, who yet dwell so fully and constantly on doctrinal points, and give the several parts of the Christian temper and conduct, in all its branches and ramifications, so little prominence, that, after all, their hearers are never taught the particulars of their duty, in the several relations to God and man, in the improvement of their talents, the redemption of their time, &c. They are told, in a few words, that they should be holy and do good works, but they are left ignorant in what genuine holiness and good works consist; and often live in sin, or neglect of duty, for want of knowing this and the other thing to be sin or duty. As a minister who had preached very strongly in this way, but afterwards saw his mistake, observed, when the conduct of his people towards him was censured, 'I ought not,' said he, 'to wonder that they fail of their duty to me, for I never taught them their duty, either to God or man, with any particularity.' Such preachers fit out their vessels with abundance of sails, and carry canvass enough; but the helm and the compass are too little attended to. They set their hearers in motion, earnest motion: but their love seldom abounds *in knowledge and in all judgment.*"

The two next letters are to the Rev. G. More, a Scotch minister, then situate in the north of England.

This gentleman appears to have written to him in consequence of reading the Force of Truth.

“ April 14, 1784. I must frankly observe that I am not much attached to externals, being decidedly of opinion, that, had the Lord Jesus intended all his people to be of the same sentiments about church government, he would have explicitly declared it, as under the Jewish dispensation, and have rendered it impossible for godly, reflecting, and judicious persons to have differed much about these things: even as it is impossible for such persons much to differ about the method of a sinner’s justification, or the nature and need of regeneration. Every man ought to be satisfied in his own mind about the lawfulness of communicating as a Christian, or officiating as a minister, in that society he belongs to, and leave others to judge for themselves; candidly supposing that men who are conscientious in other things are so in this: and, though they see not as we see, yet possibly their eyes may be as good as our’s. In my own judgment, after I hope much serious and impartial consideration, I am a moderate episcopalian and a pœdobaptist; but am entirely willing my brethren should be, some presbyterians, and some independents, and not extremely unwilling that some should be Baptists; rejoicing that Christ is preached, and the essentials of true religion upheld amongst persons of different sentiments, and only grieved that each one will be what he is *jure divino*, and judge and condemn others. I would only beseech all to leave *biting and devouring one another*, and to unite together in striving, as so many regiments in one army, against the common enemy. My avowal of my sen-

timents on this subject will help you to know your man, and what you are to expect.—My post is very different from your's. There are above two thousand inhabitants in this town, almost all Calvinists, even the most debauched of them; the gospel having been preached among them for a number of years by a variety of preachers, stately and occasionally, sound and unsound, in church and meeting. The inhabitants are become like David, *wiser than their teachers*; that is, they think themselves so, and, in an awful manner, have learned to abuse gospel notions to stupify their consciences, vindicate their sloth and wickedness, and shield off conviction. There is an independent meeting in the town, the minister of which is newly come amongst us, and for this and other reasons is very popular. He is, I doubt not, a godly man; but his preaching does not appear to me calculated to rouse a stupid audience out of their lethargy. There is also a Baptist meeting, the ministers of which heretofore, by dry supralapsarian discourses, accompanied by little alarming, inviting, searching, or practical matter, have done much to bring things to this pass. If you are acquainted with the disputes about the *modern question*, you will need nothing more to be said on that system of *passivity* introduced by the strenuous deniers of its being every man's *duty* to believe. If you have not met with any thing on this subject, on another occasion I will write a little more upon it. But the present minister is a solid, judicious, and godly man, though not an awakening preacher. . . . As for myself, I am very unpopular in this town, and preach in general to very small congregations. Be-

fore I came hither I had two curacies in the neighbourhood, one of which I retain with Olney. There I have a people to whom the Lord has made me the instrument of good. They love me, and are a comfort to me. They are not very numerous, but so many as to prevent my complaining that I have quite laboured in vain; and the Lord adds to their number one and another from time to time. O that he would multiply them a hundred, or a thousand fold!—I have a few even at Olney who cleave to me, and a small number of those who are my own; but I labour under great discouragement in this respect, and am generally looked upon as unsound, legal, Arminian. The truth of the matter is, upon mature deliberation I am convinced that the preaching of the present day is not practical enough, or sufficiently *distinguishing* between true and false experience. I therefore speak more fully than most do of the moral character of the Deity: of the excellency, glory, and loveliness of that character as described in the word of God. From this I deduce the reasonableness and excellency of the holy law of God; which I endeavour fully to open in its extensive requirements. Thence follows man's obligation to love God, both on account of his infinite loveliness, and of our natural relations and obligations to him. Then I demonstrate the evil of sin, as apostacy from this lovely and glorious God and king, and transgression of his perfect law. Thence I show the justice of God in the infinite, the eternal punishment of sinners; it being necessary that God should mark his hatred of this hateful thing, magnify his holy law, and show his justice, that he might appear glorious in the eyes of

all for ever, but rebels.—Thus I suppose I *dig deep* to lay the foundation for the gospel of free grace: the necessity, nature, and glory of the vicarious obedience and sufferings of Emmanuel; the sufficiency of his one sacrifice; and his ability and willingness to save to the uttermost all that come. Thence I show that all who will *may* come, *ought* to come, and that all sin atrociously in *not* coming: that, however, it is in no natural man's heart to come; because each man is proud, selfish, worldly, and carnal: therefore, all are without excuse. But a God of sovereign grace, having mercy on whom he will, according to his own purpose makes some willing, by regeneration. This changes the prevailing bent of the heart, and henceforth the man is not only humbly willing to be justified by faith, and saved by grace, but hates and repents of sin, loves God's law, loves holiness, and leads a holy life, sincerely, progressively, though imperfectly,—daily receiving from Christ grace so to do; and that all experience which has not this effect is false. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, &c.* My paper forbids more. This is the outline of my scheme. Pray animadvert upon it; for I would daily revise, correct, and improve it."

Some copies of the Discourse on Repentance, then just published, accompanied the next letter. The first sentence relates to that work.

"May 25, 1785.—I hope it will meet your approbation, as it goes fully to establish that practical scheme you approve, and to oppose the loose notional religion which is so common. . . .

"I am much at a loss what to say concerning your situation with your congregation. I have seen and

heard of so many such things that I am really grieved ; and discouraged respecting the success of the gospel in the dissenting congregations. No sooner does a minister begin in good earnest to address the consciences of his hearers, in an awakening, searching, and practical manner, and there is hope that religion will revive, converts be made, and Christians quickened to adorn their profession ; than some antinomian hypocrite, or some injudicious dry professor, whose tongue or purse has given him considerable influence, begins to form a party against the minister ; to censure, browbeat, discourage, oppose, or expel him. Hence some are restrained ; and, by the fear of man, *which bringeth a snare*, their ardour is damped ; they feel themselves in thralldom ; and, if they are not consciously unfaithful, they are forced to use such caution as cramps them in their ministrations, and takes off much of their pungency. Others are turned out and reduced to great difficulty : but this is by far the best, as it throws them immediately into the care of the Lord, for whose sake they suffer, and who will certainly, in due time, provide for all who suffer for him.—Thus a stupid congregation choose a pastor of their own cast, when a peculiarly alarming, heart-searching one is requisite ; and so matters grow worse and worse. Or, if the pastor they choose turns out different than they expected, they either spoil or expel him ; and thus, in many places, the form and notion are all that is retained of true religion.—But the work is the Lord's, and from time to time he interposes, in some unexpected manner, and beyond hope brings about a revival. However, in this respect, *we* (of the church) have the best of it. My discon-



tented ones, who have been numerous, have now left me in peaceable possession : many more hearers fill up, and much more than fill up their places ; and still the work of the Lord goes forward : nor hath their opposition done me any real harm, but I hope much good.—I shall tell you a short story, by way of improving this part of your letter. A dissenting minister, (at Cambridge, I think,) preaching very practically, was found fault with by his people, who gave him to understand that they must part with him, if he did not alter the strain of his preaching. The poor man, having a family, shrunk for a time : but it preyed upon his health and spirits ; which his wife observing, plainly told him that he distrusted God out of fear of man, and was unfaithful ; and begged of him to preach according to his conscience, and leave the event to God. Accordingly he did so, and was expelled. But just at that time a larger meeting, with a better salary, and a more lively people, being vacant, he was invited thither, and settled among them ; lived in plenty ; and preached with acceptance and usefulness, till removed by death. This is a matter of fact.—Be but faithful then, my brother : never mince the matter : never fear man : plead God's cause with the people, and the people's cause with God ; and make it your great business to live what you preach : and he will surely extricate you out of all difficulties. *When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him.*

“ I am not of opinion that the system of *passivity* I mentioned is new to you. The word may be, but the thing itself you seem acquainted with, to your con-

siderable uneasiness. A few words will explain my meaning. An *unconverted* man says, ‘ I can do nothing : if God would give me a heart, I should pray, repent, believe ; but I cannot give myself a heart : if he will not, how can I help it ? I must wait his time : perhaps he sometime may, and sometime he certainly will, if I be one of the elect ; and if not I must perish, and all I can do will signify nothing.’ A *professor* says, ‘ I have declined and backslidden : if God will be pleased to revive me I shall be restored : I must wait : I hope I have known better times : and He will not finally forsake his people.’ In this style they excuse their sloth and lukewarmness, quiet their consciences, stop their ears against exhortation, and, under pretence of passively waiting till God do all, and of giving him all the glory, fairly exonerate themselves of their guilt, and charge it all upon God !—Indeed Adam’s race seem determined that the glory of the good and the blame of the bad shall go together. The Arminian takes the blame of the bad to himself, and thinks it but reasonable that he should have the glory of the good too. The pseudo-Calvinist gives God all the glory of the good, but seems to think it reasonable that he should bear the blame of the bad also. But the true Christian says, ‘ To me, even to me alone, belong shame and confusion of face for all my rebellion, impenitence, unbelief, and sloth, all my days : but to God alone belongs the glory of all the good wrought in me, or done by me.’ ”

I present the reader with one more letter, strikingly displaying the fervour of the writer’s spirit in his Master’s service, and the stimulating nature of his

intercourse with his fellow-servants. It is to his friend Mr. Mayor, dated May 14, 1785.

“ My dear friend, Nothing could sufficiently apologize for my omission of writing, except your own. Nay indeed, though that does keep me in countenance, yet I do not think we are either of us excused. For a little time now and then spent in dictating a letter to each other might be a means of quickening both of us ; as we have before now found conversation to be. Remember, *Iron sharpens iron*, Yea, remember what Horace says,

— Ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum

Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi.

Therefore, whether you can cut yourself or not, try to whet me, and make me cut ; and then I hope I shall try to return the obligation. I believe Satan prevails as much against the cause of Christ by persuading ministers to sit still, or merely to go on in the beaten round, without attempting any thing more, as in any other way. My conscience is never quiet and joyful, but when I am busy in some ministerial employment ; not merely in acquiring, but in communicating the knowledge of divine things by my tongue and pen : not only by meditation endeavouring to affect my own heart, but, by some method or other, endeavouring to affect others, and stir them up to seek, trust, love, and serve the Lord. And, after a multitude of thoughts about pride, ambition, &c. influencing me to be active, (and they will insinuate themselves,) I am persuaded Satan would have me while away my life in inactivity, under pretences of modesty, diffidence, and humility ; and he never is wanting to furnish me with excuses for delaying or

shifting services. But I beg of God to rouse us from this lethargy. Paul says to Timothy, *Be instant in season, out of season; preach the word*: and seems to think there is more danger of sloth, than of too great activity in the preacher of the gospel. May the love of Christ constrain us, and compassion for perishing souls prevail with us, to leave no means untried to promote faith and holiness, and to bear testimony against irreligion and false religion; to awaken the careless, to undeceive the deluded, to allure souls to Christ, to encourage the humble, and stir up the believer to glorify God.—Write soon a letter longer than the note you sent from Birmingham, and let me know how things go on in your soul, and in your congregation. *Stir up, my brother, the gift of God that is in you.* HOC AGE. Now is the time to labour, and suffer hardship and reproach. It is both seedtime and harvest: and it is shameful to sleep in either. *Cast your bread upon the waters. Sow in the morning, and in the evening,* and water it with many prayers; and, if you see it not before, you will see the fruit of it at the last day.—Some little good is going on here, and we are waiting and praying for more: lend us your assistance in this particular. . . .

“ I should have been glad to be at Birmingham, but could not:—especially to have met you there. . . .

“ Desiring to remember you in my prayers, and requesting your prayers, I remain your very affectionate friend and brother,                    THOMAS SCOTT.”

## CHAPTER IX.

FROM THE CLOSE OF HIS MINISTRY AT OLNEY  
TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF HIS COMMENTARY  
ON THE BIBLE.

Such was the nature of my father's situation, and such the course he was pursuing, when events occurred, by which he was very unexpectedly called to occupy higher ground, and to enter upon a new field of service and of trial. But he himself shall furnish both the introduction to this change, and the history of what took place. Thus he speaks in his narrative :

“ My outward circumstances were now in some measure improved at Olney ; and my ministry, though unpopular, was in many instances evidently blessed : yet I never could make up my mind to continue there. The vicar, the Rev. Moses Browne, was very old, and there was no doubt, that, in the event of his death, I should be presented to the living, if I remained on the curacy. But this very circumstance tended to render me dissatisfied. I cannot, and need not convey to others a particular account of all things which rendered the thoughts of spending my days at Olney painful to me ; and the change of situation, from curate to vicar, would, with respect to some of them, have rather aggravated than relieved my difficulties. In part my views might be erroneous ; but, in the far greater

part, I should feel the same objection still, if Olney were what it was then ; which in some respects it certainly is not.

“ I had not, however, the most distant prospect of any other situation : and my unpopularity at Olney was itself a powerful bar to my obtaining any. This may be judged of by the following incident. I went to London, as I was accustomed to do once a year, and I was asked to preach by a friend whom I had heard with profit, as early as I so heard any one, and for whom I had repeatedly preached before. But, just as I was going into the pulpit, he said to me, ‘ Do not *scold* my people, as I have heard you do the people at Olney.’ This did not seem well timed. He, however, unreservedly testified his approbation of the sermon which I was, notwithstanding, enabled to preach. But it shows the representations which were spread of my ministry, and how unfavourable they would be to my desire of a change of situation.

“ Mr. Cowper, in letters to Mr. Newton, which have since been published by Mr. Hayley, and which pretty generally found their way to the Reviews, brought the same charge against me in strong terms ; which, coming from so eminent and popular a character, must have great weight. But Mr. C., it should be known, never heard me preach : neither did Mrs. Unwin ; nor their more respectable friends. Mr. C.’s information concerning my preaching was derived from the very persons, whose doctrinal and practical antinomianism I steadily confronted. Notwithstanding these harsh censures, however, God blessed my ministry at Olney to the conversion of many ; and to effectually repressing the antinomian spirit which had

gone forth in the place: and thus it was made subservient to the usefulness of my successors, who were not bowed down with the same load of unpopularity that I was.”

In explanation of what is here mentioned concerning Mr. Cowper’s never hearing my father preach, it should be remembered, that one feature of the unhappy illusion, under which that admired character laboured, was a persuasion that it was his duty to abstain from religious worship. I believe I am correct in stating the fact thus generally: certainly, at least, he abstained from *public* worship, as from a blessing prohibited to *him*: and I think I have a distinct recollection, that, though he might suffer prayer to be offered in the room with him, he declined joining in it.—Mrs. Unwin never quitted the object of her assiduous care.

On the success of his labours, as here represented, my father thus speaks in a letter written in the year 1793. “The effect of my ministry in the vicinity of Olney now appears much more evidently than when I left that situation: and this encourages me amidst the manifold discouragements of my present station.”—I believe there are comparatively few ministers, really having their hearts in their work, who do not find their situations, on one ground or another, discouraging. It is natural that it should be so: for in this evil world the Christian minister’s employment is all struggling against the current. I gladly therefore present all these passages, which may tend to strengthen the hands of my brethren, and may animate us still to struggle on: and I consider them all as laying a ground for what I regard as one grand

lesson afforded by my father's history, namely, *that a very discouraging course, properly sustained, may eventually prove useful beyond all expectation.*— But we continue the narrative :

“ While I was thus, in some respects, dissatisfied with my only prospect as to future life, on my return home from one of my irregular excursions, in September, 1785, I found a letter from the secretary of the Lock Hospital, written in the name of several governors, saying, that it had been resolved to appoint a person to the office of morning preacher in the chapel, and visiting chaplain to the patients; that, from what they had heard concerning me, they were of opinion that I should be a very suitable person for the situation; and that it was their request that I would come to London, and give them the opportunity of hearing me. Nothing could be more contrary to my own views of what my peculiar talent, whatever it was, qualified me for, than this proposal—except as the poor patients were concerned. I therefore wrote a very plain answer, stating my views of the gospel, and my determination to speak my mind in the plainest language, wherever I might be called to preach; and my consciousness of being totally destitute of those attractions of manner and elocution, which such a situation demanded. My friends, who afterwards saw the letter, approved it much, except the last clause, in which I consented to come and preach, if the governors still desired it. Accordingly I did go, and preached two sermons, in as plain and faithful a manner as I possibly could; without attempting any thing different from my homely style in other places. I really



thought that this specimen would be sufficient ; and I hoped good might be done to some individuals, by such addresses delivered in that place.

“ When about to return home, (after having my expenses much more than defrayed by individuals, without any charge on the funds of the charity,) I was asked, whether I would propose myself as a candidate at the ensuing election ? I answered in the negative, peremptorily. ‘ But will you accept of the situation,’ it was then said, ‘ should you be chosen, without proposing yourself ?’ I replied, ‘ I cannot tell : but certainly not, unless that choice should be almost unanimous. Having preached in the chapel, I shall now return home ; and, if I hear no more from you, you will hear no more from me.’—In a few weeks the election took place : no other person was proposed ; and I was appointed, with only three opposing voices. This was unexpected : and I saw more and more reason, on every consideration and inquiry, to conclude that, if I acceded to this appointment, I should be plunged into difficulties and trials of a most dismaying nature. Yet I did not dare to give a direct refusal, without taking further advice upon the subject. It might be an opening to more enlarged usefulness : and my own personal feelings must not be allowed much weight in such a case.—I am conscious that I wished to know and do my duty : and I went again to London, on purpose to consult such ministers as I thought most competent to advise me. But most of those whom I consulted, assuming, *groundlessly*, that I was bent on coming, did not think it worth while to waste counsel (as they supposed,) on one who would not take it. Their objections

were suppressed till the die was cast ; and then I heard them in abundance. Mr. Robinson of Leicester, indeed, to whom I wrote, gave me his sentiments faithfully and unreservedly ; stating every objection strongly, yet not absolutely deciding that they ought to prevail.

“ Here I must observe, that it is a very great fault, and instance of unfaithfulness, especially in senior ministers, when, from a supposition that a person who consults them has already made up his mind, they decline giving him their plain and honest opinion. This leads inexperienced persons to conclude that, as little or no objection is made, the proposed measure is approved by those who are consulted, and has their sanction. Yet, as, in many instances, respectable men find that their advice is not followed, and in few is received with implicit submission ; they often consider themselves justified in withholding counsel from those who ask it. Now, not as one requiring advice, but as one that has been long in the habit of giving it, I must say, that I think implicit compliance with advice given ought not to be expected. If those who seek counsel are willing to give it attentive consideration, accompanied with prayer for divine direction, it is all that we are intitled to look for : and, even if this is not done, yet, in giving the best advice in our power, we *deliver our own souls* : whereas, by withholding it, we render ourselves *partakers of other men’s sins* ; and much of the blame of that conduct, which perhaps we severely censure, really belongs to us.

“ For myself I am conscious, that I was fully disposed to give to the most faithful advice, about, or

against, acceding to the proposal of the governors of the Lock, an attentive hearing, and careful consideration; and the Lord knoweth, that every step in the business was taken, on my part, with many earnest and anxious prayers for direction: but, not finding the objections urged which I had expected, I began to consider the offer made me as a call to a self-denying duty; and was really afraid that I should commit a great sin if I pertinaciously refused it. Had I heard all those things previously to my consent, which I heard subsequently, I certainly should never have consented at all. Thus I should have escaped much distress: but, taking the whole together, I now think I should have been far less useful."

This subject of giving advice, and of what may reasonably be expected from those who ask it, was one on which my father frequently spoke; and from his letters it appears that it was one on which he early formed very just opinions. Thus in 1773 he writes to one of his sisters: "I shall, I hope, ever be obliged to my friends for advice, but I do not promise always to obey it. I will promise to add the reasons they offer to my own, to give them a vote in the consultation, and at last to let the majority carry the day, as far as I am able to discern it. That is, so long as advice serves to direct my own judgment, I shall be glad of it: but will not supersede it." Again: "One friend gives me this advice, another that: one advises me to act in this manner, another directly contrary: and what am I to do? The answer is plain: Has not God given me reason? and for what purpose, but to direct my conduct? But

to what then tends advice? To inform that reason: and, if two persons give me different counsel, I am not at liberty to act (implicitly) according to either one or the other; but to weigh the arguments on which they are both founded, and to act accordingly."—There is not here that humble appeal to superior direction, which he would never, at a later period, have omitted to mention, but in other respects the principle is the same as he ever afterwards maintained.—And, if this be a just rule for the conduct of the person asking counsel, it forms also the just measure for the expectations of the persons giving it. In this way likewise he early applied it. In 1777 he says to the same relative: "You ask my pardon for not taking my advice. This, I assure you, was needless: for I gave you my advice for your sake, not my own, and should be equally glad to hear that you succeeded well in rejecting it, as in following it." And again in 1789; "I will by no means agree that you should implicitly follow any advice, which I now, or at any other time, may give. I would propose hints, and assign reasons, and then leave you to think of them, and pray over them: which is the best way of inquiring of the Lord, to discover his will." Finally: writing to his son-in-law he thus significantly expresses the same sentiment: "you may make use of my spectacles, but see with your own eyes."

If to all this we add the observation of the wise and holy Halyburton, that "the promise of God, *to direct our steps*, does not extend always to teaching *others* what is *our* duty," it may reconcile us to persevere in giving the best advice we can to those who

ask it, without requiring or expecting to see it implicitly followed; which is what my father wished to inculcate.

He next observes in his narrative: “A circumstance which had considerable weight in deciding my mind was, the hope of getting one who, I trusted, would prove an able and useful labourer ordained to succeed me at Olney.” This was the Rev. James Bean, who, though the prospect of his immediately succeeding to Olney was not realized, “was at length ordained, went thither, and became vicar of the place; was useful there, and very acceptable to my friends and favourers; but ere long resigned the living: by which means my sanguine expectations were painfully disappointed.—Still, however, I did not give my answer to the governors of the Lock till the last day, and almost the last hour, allowed me for deliberation.

“Whatever others judged, my own people, who were most attached to me, and most grieved to part with me, were convinced that I was called by providence to remove, and that I did my duty in complying with it. I am not, however, myself to this day satisfied on the subject. I cannot doubt that my removal has, especially by means of my writings, (as far as they have been, or are likely to be, useful,) been overruled for good; but, when I consider what a situation I *inadvertently* rushed into, I fear I did not act properly, and I willingly accept all my unspeakable mortifications and vexations as a merciful correction of my conduct; which, though not, in one sense, inconsiderate, yet showed strange inattention to the state of parties, and other circum-

stances, at the Lock ; which, had I duly adverted to them, would have made me think it madness to engage in such a service."

It may well be allowed that several circumstances at that time attending the situation at the Lock, could they previously to experience have been fully realized, might not only, with good reason, have produced great hesitation as to the acceptance of it, but even have appalled a mind firm and courageous as my father's was. To be subject to the control of a board of governors, many of them looking only to the pecuniary interests of the charity ; and, what must, if possible, be still more adverse to a minister's repose, many of them thinking themselves both qualified and intitled to dictate as to his doctrine : this must, of itself, be deemed sufficiently objectionable. Moreover, the board was then split into parties ; such as frequently arise when a concern, once prosperous, becomes involved in difficulties. Still further, from the different character and sentiments of the two ministers, and the manner of my father's introduction, the chapel, and even the pulpit, was likely to be the scene of no less division than the boardroom. The Lock also might, at that period, be considered as almost the head-quarters of that loose and notional religion, on which my father had commenced his attack in the country. Laying all these things together, and taking into account his obscurity, and the humble rustic society in which, almost exclusively, he had hitherto moved, we shall cease to wonder at his last-recited remark. Still, however, contemplating the consequences of his removal to the Lock, only as far as we can now trace them ;—that, without this step,

we should never, humanly speaking, have had his Commentary on the scriptures, (to name no other of his writings;) and that the great and effective stand, which he was enabled to make in London, against a very meagre, defective, and even corrupt representation of Christianity, would never have been made: when all this is considered, I trust we may say, that thousands have reason to pronounce it a happy inadvertence, by which he overlooked difficulties that might have led him to decline the call made upon him; and that impartial bystanders will be disposed to consider “the unspeakable mortifications and vexations” which followed, as the necessary trials of his faith, the preparatives for the peculiar services he was to render, and the requisite counterpoise to prevent his being “exalted above measure,” by the flattering celebrity and the great usefulness he ultimately attained, rather than, as he himself was ready to think them, the corrections of a great impropriety of which he had been guilty.

His narrative proceeds: “My salary at the Lock was no more than 80*l.* a year, nearly 40*l.* of which was necessary for rent and taxes.<sup>1</sup> I had, however, golden promises; but I never greatly relied upon them: and I became more and more convinced, even before I left Olney, that they would not, in any measure be realized. I discovered that *party* was much concerned in the whole business; and I said to

<sup>1</sup> My father's first residence was at No. 16, Hamilton Street, Piccadilly; since transformed into the splendid Hamilton Place. At the end of twelve months he removed to No. 2, Chapel Street, Upper Grosvenor Place; in which house he continued all the remainder of his time in London.

my family, when coming to town, ‘Observe, many of those who now appear to be my friends will forsake me; but God will raise me up other friends.’<sup>1</sup>

“I had indeed imagined that I should, without much difficulty, procure a lectureship on the Sunday afternoon or evening, and perhaps one on the week-day; and I stood ready for any kind or degree of labour to which I might be called. But, whilst almost all my brethren readily obtained such appointments, I could never, during the seventeen years of my residence in town, procure any lectureship, except that of St. Mildred’s, Bread Street, which, in a manner, came to me, because no other person thought it worth applying for. It produced me, on an average, about 30% a year. Some presents, however, which I received, added considerably to its value during the last two or three years that I held it. For some years also, I preached at St. Margaret’s, Lothbury, every alternate Sunday morning, at six o’clock, to a small company of people, and administered the sacrament. The stipend, however, for this service, was only 7*s.* 6*d.*

<sup>1</sup> It is amusing to me to recollect, and it may not be altogether impertinent to mention, that the text, Prov. xxvii. 14, has been for thirty-six years distinctly impressed upon my mind, owing to my having, so long since, heard my father apply it to the then loud and ardent friendship of one of the governors of the Lock. The words are: “He that blesteth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him.” The anticipation was realized; and the friendship of this gentleman (who died many years ago,) soon cooled into indifference.

One honourable exception from the number of those persons, who, having brought my father to the Lock, afterwards deserted or neglected him, is entitled to be mentioned. I refer to John Pearson, Esq. of Golden Square, for many years surgeon to the hospital. My father always attributed more to the arguments of



a time; though I walked about seven miles in going and returning.”

My father was appointed to the Sunday afternoon lectureship in Bread Street, February 16, 1790, and retained it till he was chosen sole chaplain to the Lock, in March, 1802. His congregation seldom much exceeded a hundred in number; but they were attentive hearers, and he had reason to believe that his preaching there was useful to many persons, several of whom have since become instruments of good to others. One it may be allowable to specify, whose extensive and invaluable services may God long continue, and abundantly bless to his church! “I myself,” observes the Rev. Daniel Wilson, in a note annexed to his funeral sermons for my father, “was, five or six and twenty years since, one of his very small congregation at his lecture in the city; and I derived, as I trust, from the sound and practical instruction which I then received, the greatest and most permanent benefit, at the very time when a good direction and bias were of the utmost importance—the first setting out as a theological student.”

To the morning lecture at Lothbury, if I mistake not, he succeeded when Mr. Cecil became unable any longer to continue it. Though a source of no emolument, this too was a pleasant service to him. Few persons would attend at that early hour, who did not bear a real love to the ordinances of God’s house; and that gentleman, in deciding his acceptance of the situation at the Lock, than to those of any other person: and in Mr. P. he found a constant friend to the end of his life; to whom he was indebted for many personal favours, besides the most skilful professional assistance, promptly and gratuitously rendered to him and his family, on the numerous occasions which required it.

among them were many pious servants and others, who found obstructions to attending public worship at other parts of the day.

In adverting to these lectureships, at this period of his narrative, my father has somewhat anticipated : it may be proper that I should so far follow him, as, in this connexion, to remark the extent of his Sunday labours at that time. And this I shall do in the words of a lady of highly respectable station and connexions in life, who repeatedly passed some little time under his roof, and was particularly struck with this and other circumstances of his habits and character. She writes thus :

“ I must now, my dear sir, assure you, that during my pretty long wanderings in the world, even in the best part of it, I can truly affirm, that the various seasons I passed under the roof of your excellent parents are marked with a peculiar force on my memory, as presenting what came nearer to the perfection of a Christian’s pilgrimage than I have often met with elsewhere. And this remembrance leads me to express the hope, that you will not fail to give the *precise* and *accurate* report of your *great* father’s life to the careless and idle world. My opportunities have made me acquainted with such diversities of habits, that I believe the information you can furnish of his extraordinary labours will surprise, as well as edify many a weak brother. I have been called upon *solemnly* to attest the account of his common Sunday work, mental and bodily, as almost beyond belief.”

This address led to the request, that the writer would herself put down what had struck her, as an occasional visitant, more than it might have done

those, who, from being accustomed to it, would be apt to pass it over as a matter of course. The reply I give with such *very slight* corrections as were required.

“ The account I have been accustomed to relate of Mr. Scott’s Sunday labours, is as follows, and my memory does not tax me with inaccuracy. At four o’clock in the morning of every alternate Sunday, winter as well as summer, the watchman gave one heavy knock at the door, and Mr. S. and an old maid-servant arose,—for he could not go out without his breakfast. He then set forth to meet a congregation at a church in Lothbury, about three miles and a half off; I rather think the only church in London attended so early as six o’clock in the morning. I think he had from two to three hundred auditors, and administered the sacrament each time. He used to observe that, if at any time, in his early walk through the streets in the depth of winter, he was tempted to complain, the view of the newsmen equally alert, and for a very different object, changed his repinings into thanksgivings.—From the city he returned home, and about ten o’clock assembled his family to prayers: immediately after which he proceeded to the chapel, where he performed the whole service, with the administration of the sacrament on the alternate Sundays, when he did not go to Lothbury. His sermons, you know, were most ingeniously brought into an exact hour; just about the same time, as I have heard him say, being spent in composing them. I well remember accompanying him to the afternoon church in Bread Street, (nearly as far as Lothbury,) after his taking his dinner without sitting

down. On this occasion I hired a hackney coach: but he desired me not to speak, as he took that time to prepare his sermon. I have calculated that he could not go much less than fourteen miles in the day, frequently the whole of it on foot, besides the three services, and at times a fourth sermon at Long-acre Chapel, or elsewhere, on his way home in the evening: and then he concluded the whole with family prayer, and that not a very short one.—Considering his bilious and asthmatic habit, this was immense labour! And all this I knew him do very soon after, if not the very next Sunday after, he had broken a rib by falling down the cabin stairs of a Margate packet: and it seemed to me as if he passed few weeks without taking an emetic! But his heart was in his work; and I never saw a more devoted Christian. Indeed he appeared to me to have hardly a word or a thought out of the precise line of his duty: which made him somewhat formidable to weaker and more sinful beings.—His trials, I should think, (as you would have me honest with you,) were those of temper. Never, I often remarked, was there a petition in his family prayers, for any thing but the pardon of sin, and the suppressing of corruption.

“His life, and labours, and devotedness, kept him from much knowledge of the world; but the strength of his judgment gave him a rapid insight into passing affairs: and upon the whole I should be inclined to say, he was one of the wisest men I ever knew.—You know more than I can do of the nature and habits of his daily life. I can only say that, when fatigued with writing, he would come up stairs, where the Bible was generally open, and his relaxation seemed

to be, talking over some text with those whom he found there: and I can truly declare that I never lived in a happier or more united family.”

It is implied in the above account, that my father's sermons were usually composed the same day they were delivered. This was literally the case. For more than five and thirty years, he never put pen to paper in preparing for the pulpit, except in the case of three or four sermons, preached on particular occasions, and expressly intended for publication: yet no one who heard him would complain of crudeness or want of thought in his discourses: they were rather faulty in being overcharged with matter, and too argumentative for the generality of hearers.—Indeed, an eminent chancery lawyer used to say that he heard him for professional improvement, as well as for religious edification; for that he possessed the close argumentative eloquence peculiarly requisite at that bar, and which was found to be so rare an endowment.—Nor did the bustle of the streets of London occasion any interruption to his meditations: he would generally rather prepare his sermons walking than in his study.

His statement concerning his pecuniary resources in London (from which we digressed,) he thus concludes: “The Lord, however, provided for me very comfortably; though, even on the retrospect, I can hardly explain or conceive how it was done. A subscription was annually raised for me at the Lock, as had been promised; but it fell considerably short of what I had been taught to expect, and a great proportion of it came from persons who had no concern in bringing me thither. I might

mention some respectable names of persons, wholly unknown to me when I came to town, who became my liberal friends; and of some who, though they always disapproved my ministry, and avowed their disapprobation, yet contributed to my support."

I confess it is with some reluctance that I admit these details of the straitened and dependent provision made for my father, in each successive place to which he removed: not that I feel as if any personal degradation attended the circumstance, but lest it should seem to be obtruding upon notice private affairs, which have now passed away. Still I conceive there may be sufficient reasons for not withholding them. They present one part of those "struggles through life" which make up his history. To some they may surely afford occasion of gratitude: *they* are, at least, comparatively rich. Others may derive encouragement from knowing that my father always lived comfortably, though literally he did little more than receive "day by day his daily bread." All may justly be stimulated, while they see that such narrow circumstances were never any check to his unwearied and disinterested labours to be useful. And, finally, I must insist upon it, that such circumstances, borne as he bore them, ennobled his character. Dr. Franklin has remarked, that it is "hard to make an empty bag stand upright:" but, however empty, my father always stood upright—not with the uprightness of integrity only, but of independence: I do not mean the pride which refuses to receive or to acknowledge an obligation, but that firm rectitude which will not sacrifice judgment and principle to any consideration

whatever. This has in some degree appeared already, and it will appear still further in what is to follow.— We turn to his labours at the Lock.

“ There was a weekly lecture at the Lock chapel, on the Wednesday evening, which the evening preacher and I were to take alternately. All circumstances considered, I did not expect much usefulness from this service. I therefore intreated the acting governors to allow me, in addition to it, to preach a lecture on the Friday evenings; the service to be altogether my own. This, after some hesitation, was conceded. The congregation, which might be expected to attend, I was aware, was decidedly Calvinistic: but I was fully determined to bring forward at this lecture (which indeed I had desired almost exclusively for that purpose,) every thing, in the most particular manner, relative to the Christian temper and conduct. With this view I formed, as I foolishly thought, a very sagacious plan. I gave notice that I would lecture, in an expository manner, on the Epistle to the Ephesians, in order. At first I was very well attended, my congregation generally consisting of more than three hundred persons. This continued while I was going through the more doctrinal part of the Epistle; though I applied the doctrine very plainly to practical purposes, and often intimated my hope, that I should be favoured with equal attention, when I came to speak more particularly on Christian tempers and the relative duties. But *the Lord took the wise in his own craftiness*. When I arrived at the latter part of the fourth chapter, the alarm was spread; though I stamped every exhortation strongly with an evangelical seal. But

at length, when I preached from the fifth chapter, on the words, *See that ye walk circumspectly, &c.* the charge was every where circulated, that I had changed my principles, and was become an Arminian: and, at once, I *irrecoverably* lost much above half my audience. The Sunday morning congregation also greatly decreased: dissatisfaction was manifested in the looks and language of all the acting governors, even such as had been most friendly: and I seemed to have no alternative, but that of either receding voluntarily from my situation, or being disgracefully dismissed.

“ I had, however, no place to which to retire: every door seemed to be shut against me. On this emergency, amidst very many interruptions, and under inexpressible discouragement, I wrote in the course of a week, and preached on the Sunday morning following, (November 26, 1786,) my sermon on Election and Final Perseverance. By the next week it was printed and ready for sale: and a thousand copies were sold in about three days. A second edition was printed: but the public were saturated, and few copies were disposed of.

“ While I was preparing this sermon, I dined with rather a large party, many of the company governors of the Lock, and zealous, in their way, for Calvinism. In the evening it was proposed, according to custom, to discuss some religious subject: and, being really desirous of information, I proposed a question concerning the precise boundaries between Calvinism and Arminianism, respecting which so much prejudice against my ministry had been excited. But *in conference they added nothing unto me*: and, two dis-



senters excepted, no one offered any thing sufficient to show that he understood the subject. So that, when I concluded with my own remarks, it was allowed that I was more decidedly Calvinistic than the rest of the company!—This was suited in one way to gratify me: but it was still more calculated to convince me, that I was placed in a most unpromising situation.”

I well remember the utter astonishment which my father expressed on returning from the party here alluded to. He had not conceived it possible that men, known in the religious world, could have allowed themselves boldly to take a side, and to talk loudly in favour of a system, of which they scarcely knew the outlines, and the grounds of which they were not able to explain, still less to defend.—It is much to be hoped, that so instructive a record, as we are now considering, will not have been written in vain. That some, at least, will allow themselves to be put on their guard against being scared by the terror of a mere name; and will be induced, after the honourable example of the Bereans, “to search the scriptures” concerning what they hear, and to ask, not by what distinctive appellation it may be described, but whether it is “according to the oracles of God” or not.—It is to be hoped, also, that some persons, immersed, perhaps, in secular business, from Monday morning till Saturday night, may be induced to doubt whether they are quite so well qualified to decide upon difficult theological questions, as they may have taken it for granted that they were.

I fear it is but too obvious, with respect to many of the numbers who were “irrecoverably” driven

from the Lock, when my father proceeded to unfold and apply the parts of St. Paul's writings which treat of "Christian tempers and relative duties," that their real objection was not to Arminianism, (of which they very probably scarcely knew the meaning,) but to *half, or more than half, the word of God*. They had been accustomed to overlook it themselves, and could not bear to have it pressed upon their notice by another.

My father continues: "I had at this time many instructors as to my style of preaching; and some at the Lock board assumed rather a high tone of authority: while others were disposed to counsel me as the messengers of Ahab did Michaiah. (1 Kings, xxii. 13, 14.) But I disposed of the dictating instruction very shortly. 'Gentlemen,' I said, 'you possess authority sufficient to change me *for* another preacher, whenever you please; but you have no power to change me *into* another preacher. If you do not convince my understanding that I am in an error, you can never induce me to alter my method of preaching.'

"The vexations, however, which I continually experienced, often overcame for a time my patience and fortitude. On one occasion they led me to say to my wife, 'Whatever be the consequence, I will quit this situation; for I shall never have any peace in it.' She promptly answered: 'Take heed what you do: if you leave your station in this spirit, you will perhaps soon be with Jonah in the whale's belly.' The check was seasonable, and procured my acquiescence.

"Various plans were devised to counteract the declension of the congregation, consequent on my

increasing unpopularity. Among others a preacher of some name offered, when in town, to take the Sunday morning sermon gratuitously; and this was proposed to me with assurances that my income should suffer no diminution. I answered, ‘Gentlemen, I came hither for the work, and not for the wages; and if you take that from me, I will certainly go and seek employment elsewhere.’ This disconcerted the plan; which was, however, abandoned chiefly through the interposition of the Earl of Dartmouth (a constant attendant on the morning service at the Lock,) who remarked, ‘That he thought it would be better for the gentleman in question to reside on his living, and attend to his own flock, than to intermeddle with other men’s labours: and that, if the present preachers in the chapel were incompetent, it might be proper to dismiss them, but not in so disgraceful a manner to supersede either the one or the other of them.’

“Every thing, however, conduced to render me more and more unpopular, not only at the Lock, but in every part of London; and numbers, who never heard me preach, were fully possessed with the idea, that there was something very wrong both in my preaching and in my spirit. Much defect, especially as to manner, I am fully conscious of: but I am *equally conscious*, that I did not give way to anger in my ministry; but that my most distinguishing reprehensions of those, who perverted the doctrines of the gospel to antinomian purposes, and my most awful warnings, were the language of compassionate love, and were accompanied by many tears and prayers. My most respectable and constant hearers, who often expressed dissatisfaction with my manner,

and with my dwelling disproportionately on certain points in debate ; or being too severely pointed in exposing the religious deficiencies of persons of fair moral character ; never imputed to me a harsh and angry spirit in the pulpit. The charge of *scolding* was brought against me, precisely as had been the case at Olney, either by those who seldom or never heard me, or by those very practical antinomians, whose awful and pernicious delusion I endeavoured to expose.

“ During this time, almost my whole comfort, as a minister, arose from my labours in the hospital, which, with all the disgusting circumstances of the service, were far more pleasing and encouraging to me, than preaching in the chapel. I constantly attended twice in the week ; each time preaching first in the women’s wards, and then in the men’s. I took the plainest portions of scripture, and spoke in a strain of close address to the conscience, and altogether in a manner, which I could never equal in any other place ; and so as always to fix the attention, and often greatly to affect the hearts of my poor profligate auditors. I concluded each address with an appropriate prayer. I was restricted by no rules : indeed I could not have acted to my own satisfaction, had any been prescribed : but I did the very best that I could.

“ I soon perceived the plan, and indeed the institution itself, to be utterly incomplete, as far as the female patients were concerned : as they had, in general, on leaving the hospital, no other alternative open before them but returning to their former course of life, (which, in the great majority of instances, was that of prostitution ;) or encountering hardships

which it could not be supposed they would have resolution to endure. Direct starving, indeed, cannot in this country, be a frequent danger : but to prefer the frowns and reproaches of the parish officer, and the restraints and grievances of a workhouse, under the most unfavourable circumstances possible, to the ruinous indeed, but for the moment jovial and self-indulgent life to which she has been accustomed, is more than can reasonably be expected of a female patient just discharged from the Lock Hospital.<sup>1</sup> It could not then be hoped that these women, so situate, would do otherwise than close their ears against all instruction, and every admonition which called them to so severe a trial.

“ Amidst all my difficulties, therefore, I formed the plan of an asylum, into which such of these unhappy objects, as desired it, might be admitted on their leaving the hospital. I wrote a pamphlet on the subject, and read it in manuscript to Lord Dartmouth, Sir Charles Middleton, (since Lord Barham,) and some others. Being encouraged by them, I printed it, proposing, at the same time, a meeting to be held for the purpose of taking the subject into consideration: and, putting it under cover as a letter, I left it myself at the doors of most of the nobility and principal gentry in town. Being so left, it was generally read; and the result is known. A meeting was held, (April 18, 1787,) the Duke of Manchester taking the chair;

<sup>1</sup> It would be to require of them “ the faith and constancy of a martyr (in steadily preferring the greatest hardships to a ready relief by sin,) in the very first onset of a reformation.” My father’s Pamphlet, 1787.

and, with much difficulty, an asylum was formed, on a very small scale. It often appeared to me that it must be given up, for want of money to defray the expenses. For a long time the only return I met with for my assiduity was censure, even from quarters from which I least expected it: but I trust several immortal souls have been, and will be saved by means of the institution.—I cannot doubt that the very opposition at first made to it by some friends of the Magdalen, who afterwards favoured it, occasioned some important improvements in the management of that charity: and institutions on the same general principle have since been formed at Dublin, Bristol, Hull, and some other places, (not to mention the London Penitentiary,) in respect of which the Letters I received fully showed, that my little attempt had in some measure suggested the idea to those who founded them.”

The reflecting reader will not fail to be struck with the wonted zeal and energy of my father's mind, as displayed on this occasion, in forming and carrying into effect such a design, while he was yet an obscure stranger in London, and in other respects very disadvantageously situate.—During the whole term of his continuance in town he acted as chaplain to the new institution, and took the principal share in the management of its concerns. For several years he attended daily (without any remuneration,) to conduct family worship, and give religious instruction in the house: and he constantly had a servant in his family taken from the asylum. The reports drawn up by him, detailed many instances of those who were not only reclaimed and restored to society, but evi-

dently converted to God by the means thus used ; and who showed this by a long course of consistent conduct ; terminating, in several cases, in a Christian and happy death.

It might be observed, that my father printed an abridgment of his Discourse on Repentance, (forty or fifty pages,) and gave a copy to each patient discharged from the hospital, who chose to apply for it. He also published a little tract, entitled “ Hints to Patients in Hospitals,” not adapted exclusively to the case of those amongst whom he laboured.

An extract of a letter written by him in May, 1789, may be properly introduced in this connexion. It may both display the strength of his feeling upon such subjects, and convey an useful hint to more than one description of persons. It should be remembered that it comes from one, who had ample opportunity of knowing the truth of what he asserts.

“ By no means let ——— come to London, if you can help it. I look upon the young women who come to London for places, (a few prudent and very clever ones excepted,) just in the light I do upon the cattle that come to Smithfield market : they come to be a prey to the inhabitants. I wonder any of those who have not very prudent and friendly connexions escape prostitution. . . . At every offence, girls are turned out of doors with a month’s wages, often in the evening, and at an hour’s warning. They have lodgings to seek : a set of wretches let lodgings, who make it their study to betray them into situations from which few escape. Often their clothes are stolen : if not, they are pawned for money to pay expenses, and in a few weeks they are thus stripped of apparel, and

can go to no place at all. In short, dangers are innumerable, and the number that, without any such previous intention, are seduced and become prostitutes, and perish without any regarding it, is incredible. It is shocking to me beyond expression: and I think I should leave London with pleasure, for this single circumstance, did not a sense of duty at present detain me: but perhaps that will not long be the case.—But all will be well, and will end well, for them that trust in and serve God.”

The narrative proceeds: “In the summer of 1787 I visited Olney and the vicinity, and there preached a sermon on Phil. i. 9—14, which I afterwards printed, chiefly for the benefit of my late people there: but it has since been repeatedly published, in an extended form, under the title of ‘A Treatise on Growth in Grace.’”

The visit here referred to was not the first which he paid to his beloved people in Buckinghamshire: he had been with them in the autumn of 1786. Nor was this sermon the only proof of his care for them. From letters to a principal parishioner at Ravenstone, I find that he sent them frequent supplies of books, wrote them pastoral letters adapted to their circumstances, and made remittances of money for the relief of their temporal wants. From this correspondence I shall introduce some extracts in their proper place.

He proceeds concerning his publications: “Having added this discourse to the Force of Truth, the Treatise on Repentance; and the Sermon on Election and Final Perseverance; and finding nothing which I published sell, even so far as to pay the expenses, I concluded that I had mistaken my



talent, and almost resolved to print no more. Yet I had much spare time, and I found little either advantage or comfort in visiting.

“ For some time I had frequent invitations to meet dinner parties formed of persons professing religion ; and I generally accepted them : yet I seldom returned home without dissatisfaction, and even remorse of conscience. One day (the Queen’s birth day) I met, at the house of a rather opulent tradesman, a large party, among whom were some other ministers. The dinner was exceedingly splendid and luxurious, consisting of two courses, including every delicacy in season. Some jokes passed upon the subject ; and one person in particular, a minister of much celebrity, said, ‘ If we proceed thus, we shall soon have the gout numbered among the privileges of the gospel !’ This passed off very well : but in the evening, a question being proposed on the principal dangers to which evangelical religion was exposed in the present day, when it came to my turn to speak, I ventured to say, that *conformity to the world* among persons professing godliness was the grand danger of all. One thing led to another, and the luxurious dinner did not pass unnoticed by me. I expressed myself as cautiously as I could, consistently with my conscience ; but I observed that, however it might be needful for Christians in superior stations sometimes to give splendid and expensive dinners to their worldly relations and connexions, yet, when ministers and Christians met together as such, it was not consistent ; but should be exchanged for more frugal entertainments of each other, and more abundant feeding of *the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind.* (Luke xiv. 12—14.)

—Probably I was too pointed ; and many strong expressions of disapprobation were used at the time : but I went home as one who had thrown off a great burden from his back ; *rejoicing in the testimony of my conscience*. The consequence was, a sort of tacit excommunication from the circle. The gentleman at whose house this passed never invited me again but once, and then our dinner was, literally, a piece of boiled beef. He was, however, I believe, a truly pious man, though misled by bad examples and customs. He always continued to act towards me in a friendly manner ; and, though I had not seen him for several years, he left me a small legacy at his death.

“ By these means I had still more unoccupied time, which I did not well know how to turn to good account : for I found little opening or encouragement in attempting to visit and converse with the poor ; and I had neither the same views of preparing for future service, by study, that I have since had, nor the means of obtaining proper books for the purpose. Yet in one way or another, I was always employed.”

The above observations lead to the account of my father's undertaking his Commentary on the scriptures. We have now, therefore, arrived at the eve of his commencing the great work of his life ; and, previously to entering upon its history, it may be advisable here again to pause, and review such parts of his correspondence as have come to hand, illustrative of the period and the subjects which have already passed before us, and of his situation and proceedings at the Lock even to a somewhat later date.

To his elder sister he gave the following account

of his new station and employments, soon after his settlement in London.

“ January 19, 1786. I can form no manner of conclusion whether this removal will be an advantage or disadvantage to my secular interest. However I have acted according to my judgment and conscience, and find no difficulty in leaving the event to him who says, *Seek first the kingdom of God, &c. . . .* The Sunday morning congregations are large, and many of them persons of rank and fortune, who yet approve of our unfashionable doctrines. I preach likewise every other Wednesday evening, and every Friday evening to considerable numbers. At stated times in the week I visit the patients, explain the scriptures, and pray with them. They are in general of the most wretched and abandoned of the human species, many of them common prostitutes: yet, remembering that Jesus himself disdained not to preach to such, and told the proud Pharisees, that *the publicans and harlots entered into the kingdom of heaven before them*, I take pleasure in this work, and expect much good from it; and I find the poor wretches exceedingly attentive, and very much affected. Jesus Christ is *able to save to the uttermost all them that come to God by him; and him that cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out.* Nothing is wanting but to convince them all of their need of such a Saviour.—About seven hundred of these poor creatures pass through the hospital in the course of a year. So you see I have some work, but I want more.”

A letter to his younger sister, May 6, 1786, notices a publication which has not been mentioned in the narrative. “ Dr. Conyers of Deptford, a very

excellent minister, died, almost in the pulpit, last Sunday sennight: and last Sunday I preached a sermon at the Lock with some reference to this event, which I have been applied to, from a respectable quarter, to commit to paper; probably for publication. This must be done immediately.”—The quarter from which the application came was, I believe, the late John Thornton, Esq. whose friendship my father enjoyed, and whose sister Dr. Conyers had married.

The case of an orphan niece, in a precarious state of health, gave occasion to the following judicious advice in the same letter.

“ I would hope, and have you hope the best of her in respect of spiritual concerns; but would have *her* fear the worst. Long experience convinces me that no mistake is more common or fatal, than too hastily encouraging persons under serious impressions to think that they have already passed a saving change, and that all is now well. Representing salvation as invariably consequent upon a diligent, humble, persevering application to Christ, in prayer and the use of means, affords a sufficient stay to the newly awakened mind, keeps it attentive, and spurs it on to diligence. But, should a person *falsely* think all right, this persuasion will sooth his conscience, slacken his diligence, and lull him to sleep. Our compassion for persons under concern for their salvation often operates in this manner. But a skilful surgeon is always afraid of a hasty cure.—This hint I know you will understand, and, in speaking to your niece, will take care to keep alive a jealousy of herself.—I hope I do continue to pray for her, and you, and all my relations. I have

much cause for gratitude for the past, and encouragement for the others; especially as I am continually getting *auxiliaries* to assist me in praying for them.”

To the Rev. John Ryland, Jun. Northampton, now Dr. Ryland of Bristol, he thus writes :

“ May 24, 1786. I trust I can truly say that I also have the welfare of all the friends of truth and holiness near my heart; and I know but few in my *own* line, that I feel more cordially united to, than yourself, Mr. Fuller and Mr. Symmonds.<sup>1</sup> I hear also that you all have your trials, and did I not hear, I should suppose it as a thing of course; because I trust the Lord loves you, and intends to make use of you; and the devil hates you, and fears the effects of your goings on. From both these causes trials must spring: but here lies the difference, the Lord means your good, the devil your hurt: but the Lord will accomplish his design, and make the devil, sorely against his will, to be his instrument in so doing.— I have not *read*, though I have just seen R. R.’s sermons, who seems fast verging towards infidelity or scepticism. The Lord preserve us from the *pride* of learning and abilities. If we once think ourselves competent to understand the Bible by dint of our own sagacity, and skill in languages and criticism, without an *immediate* and continual dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit, we are within a few paces of some dreadful downfall. Witness Madan, Withers, (though scarcely worthy to keep such company,) and R. Robinson; who in their several publications all either expressly disavow, or tacitly pass by the mention of such a dependence.—Your in-

<sup>1</sup> Of Bedford.

telligence from New England is of another sort, and right glad I am to hear that now, when, by other accounts, *the enemy is coming in like a flood*,—an inundation of Socinianism, infidelity, and profligacy, —*the Spirit of the Lord is lifting up a standard against him*. May he revive his work as in former days among them!—But I must not proceed further without answering your kind inquiries after me and mine. The Lord has enabled me so to conduct myself toward Mr. ———, that, though there may not be all that cordiality which might be wished for, there is no dissension, nor much shyness. There seemed at first a strong and formed party against me among the hearers; but I believe it will all die away of itself. Mr. S. has withdrawn his assistance from the charity, and endeavoured to influence some others: but the Lord has raised up new friends and subscribers, and the charity sermons exceeded expectation. The congregation increases, and consequently, we suppose, the income of the chapel. In the year ending Lady Day, 1783, the chapel brought in 760*l.*: the year ending Lady Day, 1786, it brought in less than 500*l.* Had the income continued to diminish, my situation would have been very uneasy, if not untenable. But the promising appearances have encouraged my friends, stilled my enemies, and brought over some. At the same time my very homely, plain, rough practical preaching is received in a manner more favourable than I could have imagined. Lord and Lady Dartmouth, and a few others of the higher ranks, by their approbation have given a sanction to it. The cry of Arminian and Papist was raised, but soon died away. Mr. S. wrote twice to me, and then

gave me up. I question whether all the whole number of governors (two or three excepted,) are not staunch friends; if not out of love to the gospel, yet out of regard to the charity. As to success, I can only say, that there is a very pleasing and promising attention, and an increase of numbers: many of Mr. ———'s friends are reconciled to my preaching, and I preach in many places with tolerable acceptance to great numbers. And among the patients I hope some good will be, and is done. But another time I may be more particular. I believe I have done right. I am glad to inform you, that Mr. Foster, and several others, preach fully upon our plan, and more are preaching invitingly and practically. Dr. Withers gains no regard here, and seems to sink into oblivion. I have published a second edition of the Discourse on Repentance, with some additions, in which I have borne testimony against some of his sentiments without mentioning his name. I hope to have done in a few weeks, when I shall perhaps see you. We are all tolerably well, and send as much love to you *all* as can be crammed in.

Yours affectionately,

T. SCOTT."

July 15th he observes to Mrs. Webster: "I have a great deal of additional preaching, so that I am almost constantly engaged that way four days in the week, three of them (including the hospital,) both morning and evening; and frequently more. 'This, with teaching my children, and many other ordinary engagements, greatly takes up my time. And then I am not very stout, and cannot go through so much as some people can."

The closing sentence almost provokes a smile, when it is considered what his actual performances were.

To the same correspondent he further explains his views and proceedings. August 12th. "The additional preaching I mentioned is not stated, but occasional: and indeed I find such increasing employment in the occasional line, in every part of the city and environs, that I am much less desirous of obtaining lectureships, or other stated preaching; apprehending that I may do more real good to souls in the former than in the latter way, especially for some time: because my views of religion are much more practical, than many of their's who hold and preach the same doctrinal sentiments. And that, which chiefly prejudices many persons against those doctrines, is the notion which they entertain, that they do not lead to holy practice. This also causes many to embrace them notionally, who abuse and disgrace them. All ways the cause is injured: and I am assured, nothing can effectually do so much good, as showing fully and frequently their tendency to, and inseparable connexion with, practical holiness. As I am therefore favoured with access to many pulpits, and am heard with patience and tolerable acceptance in inculcating this practical improvement of the doctrines which I profess in common with multitudes, I hope to be more useful this way than if confined to one place. And, as to the emolument, what is needful will not be withheld. If I do serve God, he will neither starve me nor mine: and I would look no further. It is true, that not only is a great part of my preaching at present without recompense, but it



sometimes costs me money besides labour : as, when I go a long way to preach charity sermons, and am forced to take a coach, I do not like to charge the charity. But my congregation at the Lock alone is able, and I believe, willing to maintain me and my family.

“ The Lord does not please to gratify any one of our family with much affluence and prosperity in this world ; but entangles first one and then another in difficulties in their circumstances : I hope because he hath better things in store for them. We must be brought to despair of satisfaction in the world, before we in good earnest *seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*. We must be taught experimentally, that even for temporal things there is no dependence to be placed on our industry, ingenuity, frugality, or carefulness ; that in the use of means, we may learn simply to trust the Lord for daily bread : and, in like manner, we must be convinced, that we have neither wisdom, righteousness, nor strength for obtaining eternal salvation, that, despairing of help from ourselves, we may come and trust in him, who of God is made to each believer *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*.

The following letter to his esteemed dissenting correspondent, recently mentioned, may throw some additional light on what has already been pretty fully explained in the narrative.

“ December 7, 1786.—You will recognise *Ennomos Christo*<sup>1</sup> in the Theological Miscellany ; under which signature you will probably meet with something

<sup>1</sup> His usual signature in the work referred to :—the meaning, “ Under the law to Christ.” 2 Cor. ix. 21.

every month, if the editor chooses to insert it. But I am constrained to launch upon the troublesome deep in a more public manner, and in some sense to engage in the same controversy, or at least argument, with Mr. Fuller. I have raised a considerable opposition against me, both at the Lock and among the general body of professors in our line in London; not without some measure of shyness in several ministers; by my exhortatory and practical address, with which you are acquainted. This has been strangely misapprehended and misrepresented, both by the hearers and others; as if Christ and faith and grace were left out, because duty, holiness, and good works were brought in. There was, by this means, and through party, a considerable underhand discontent working for some time past, to which I was no stranger; but it seemed not very formidable or hurtful: but at length some trivial circumstances, too tedious to relate, gave the occasion, and the cry of Arminianism rapidly spread; and the congregation was so terrified for fear of so dreadful a name, (for really they are few of them competent to judge of the thing,) that I was confounded to find, in a few weeks, half the company missing. I really deemed my place untenable, till many firm friends, especially among the governors, stood forth, and encouraged me to persevere, and advised me to speak explicitly on the subject. Accordingly I gave public notice that I would, the next Lord's day, fully declare and explain my sentiments on those points. Afterwards, considering that accuracy and temper were very needful, I determined to write my sermon, and then, reflecting how many had misrepresented the matter to others, I de-

terminated to appeal to the public by printing it. It is now in the press—on John vi. 37—40, entitled, ‘The doctrines of Election and Final Perseverance stated, and shown to be consistent with exhortatory and practical preaching, and conducive to holiness of life,’ I have not much gone out of my way to combat the opinions of others; nor merely confined myself to argumentative matter, nor indeed to my avowed subject: yet there is the substance of what you have heard from me on these topics.

I know not your precise idea of the extent of Christ’s death. Archbishop Usher’s letter, in the *Theological Miscellany* for May, exactly states mine; with which I think Dr. Bellamy coincides in his ‘True religion delineated.’ I have not given any needless provocation either to the Arminians or pseudo-Calvinists: but if they should attack me, I must do as occasion requires. I believe it has answered, and will do so, its purpose in this congregation, and in the neighbourhood, as far as relates to my personal concerns. I trust the cause is that of God and truth, which must prevail.”

Another letter to the same correspondent, though of a later date, may not improperly be introduced here, as it further explains the writer’s views, without any thing else peculiar to the time at which it was written, than a slight reference to his *Essays* then in the course of publication in the form of tracts.

“September 30, 1793. The little *Essays* sell very fast, and I hope will have a measure of usefulness. However, truth is the only seed from which real holiness or happiness can grow; and, unless seed be sown, we cannot expect a crop. Indeed much of

it may perish in the ground, and much of it lie dormant for a long time; yet our business is, in every way, and by every means, to be sowing the truth according to our apprehensions of it, and to trust in God, and beg of him to render it productive by his special grace. This is particularly the great business of a minister's life; and, though we often may seem to labour in vain, and discouragements may be needful for us, *to keep us from being exalted above measure*, we shall, I trust, find at last, that more of the seed sown was productive, than we in general supposed. It appears to me that a superficial gospel will almost always at first make more rapid progress, than the whole truth of revelation solidly proposed to mankind; (except at such seasons as that which followed the day of Pentecost :) but then these superficial effects die away, and gradually come to little; whereas the less apparent effect of the whole truth abides and increases permanently. This has been remarkably the case in the vicinity of Olney: the effect of my ministry now appears much more evidently, than when I left that situation; and this encourages me, amidst the manifold discouragements of my present station.—You see I take it for granted, in opposition to the verdict of a vast majority of London professors, that I have the truth on my side: and indeed I have so long and so earnestly examined the sacred scriptures, and considered the various schemes of those around me, with fervent, constant prayer to know the truth, more than for almost any other merey, that I scarcely know how to think that I can be mistaken in those *grand matters*, in which I differ from so many modern professors in the establishment, among the two descriptions

of methodists, and among the dissenters; for, as to lesser differences, I am not very confident, and am probably mistaken in many things; but not willingly. Yet I can truly say, that I scarcely ever hear or read any way of stating doctrines different from what I adopt, but I give it a fair examination, and seek to know the mind of God respecting it; desiring to be a learner, that I may be a teacher to the end of my life. In general I accord with the American divines: and yet, in some things, I rather dissent from them; especially in that, as I think, they rather consider what true religion is in the abstract, than as it subsists in the mind of such poor creatures as we are, with all our infirmities, prejudices, &c. &c.: in that they sometimes insist on the necessity of *seeing* such and such things, when perhaps many upright souls only *believe* them, that is, allow them to be so on God's testimony, though they cannot see them so clearly as others do: in that they seem sometimes to give too little encouragement to inquirers: and in that they would have self-love almost excluded from religion; whereas it seems to me, that it is a part of our nature as God made us, not as sin hath made us; that sin has only perverted it, and that grace recovers us from that perversion, and brings us to love ourselves wisely, by seeking happiness in God and not in the creature; in which exercise of it, it perfectly consists with the supreme love of God, and equal love of our neighbour, and with doing all to the glory of God.

“When I began to write, I no more thought of this subject than I did of filling my paper, which I have almost done. However, as I trust truth is our ob-

ject, and as we are both likely to be placed in situations, if we are spared, in which we shall disseminate, perhaps widely, those principles we deem to be truth, and as a little deviation may sometimes counteract our endeavours, I should not be sorry now and then, when you have leisure, to exchange a letter on these subjects ; as the discussion of them may be mutually useful to us. I am, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and brother,

T. S.”

I shall next lay before the reader some extracts of letters to his late respected parishioner, Mrs. Godfrey, of Ravenstone.

“ December 20, 1786. The opposition was so great against me here in town since my return from Bucks, that my congregation seemed almost gone, and other pulpits shut against me ; and I thought it scarcely possible for me long to maintain my post at the Lock, or in London. I know not that ever I was so desponding about any thing in all the time that I have preached. But, after much discouragement, I determined to make another effort, and both to explain my sentiments to the congregation and to appeal to the public. I therefore wrote, preached, and published the sermon I send you ; and, I bless God, it seems far to exceed my most sanguine expectations of success. Misrepresentation seems silenced and prejudices diminished ; the congregation increases ; a spirit of inquiry appears to be excited ; many confess that they did not well understand the matter, and that there is a necessity for more practical preaching. So that I trust all things shall tend to

the furtherance of the gospel, and to diffuse more widely, than my preaching extends, those views of Christianity, which I have delivered and you received in your neighbourhood. . . . I have nothing to add to the exhortations I have so often given, but my prayers *that you may abound more and more*. The notion of religion goes down very well, but the devil and the world hate the power of it: therefore we ought to love it. Give my love to all your family, and to all the dear people, along with the sermons."

"January 25, 1787. We thank you for your present and your letter. The former was acceptable, the latter more so; for it reminded me of former times, and revived the assurance, that, however the doctrine I deliver may be reviled and slighted, it is indisputably that doctrine, which is *the power of God unto salvation*; as the lives of many in your neighbourhood do testify. If I should exhort you all to go forward, and abound more and more in every good word and work; I doubt not that you would in return exhort and incite me to do the same; and, notwithstanding all opposition, and regardless of all consequences, to preach to all around the same truths which you have heard, received, feel, shew the effects of, and rejoice in. I trust the Lord will enable us all thus to do. But it is grievous to think to what a degree the blessed gospel is abused and corrupted, where it is not openly opposed or neglected; and what numbers are willing to hear a part of the truth, who will not hear the whole of it. The time is lamentably come, when numbers *will not endure sound doctrine, but turn away their ears from the truth, and are turned unto fables*. However, I have reason

to think, that neither my preaching nor publishing shall be in vain. We have numbers of such professors as Olney abounds with : but we have a remnant of another sort ; and I trust they are increasing even at the Lock. The post is very difficult and precarious, but I trust that it will all issue well. I have need of much prudence, patience, meekness, and courage ; and therefore you have need to pray much for me.”—He adds, that he had “ written a letter to the people,” on a particular subject.

“ June 28, 1787. My journey (into Buckinghamshire) was very encouraging and establishing to myself, and I hope to others also. I pray God the seed sown may spring up abundantly, and appear evidently in the lives of believers, and in the conversion of sinners. But, when I got home, I began again to struggle with my difficulties, and seem to have got into another world, amongst another species of creatures ; religion seems such a different thing amongst them. Yet I cannot but hope that, in process of time, the same effects will follow as have in your neighbourhood. But I am often discouraged, and ready to think I shall never be able to keep my post, or do any good in it. Then again I am encouraged : and all this is to teach me, that *the help that is done on earth, the Lord doeth it himself*. Upon the whole, every thing concurs to satisfy me that I am in my proper place, and doing my Master’s work, and preaching the truth of God, (though often with much mixture of human infirmity ;) and that it is exceedingly wanted here, and that nothing else can rectify the disorders which prevail : and therefore, if this doctrine cannot obtain a hearing, or doth not



produce an effect, true religion must be extinguished in the congregation. But indeed London is such a mass of wickedness, and even religion is here such a superficial slight matter, so very yielding and worldly, that every thing I see and hear, as well as what I feel, is grievous. When I look into the Bible, and view the religion therein contained, it is so pure, so beautiful, so divine, that I long to see its counterpart on earth: but, when I look for it in this and the other church, or denomination of Christians, I seem to find nothing like it; but its opposite: hatred instead of love, pride instead of humility, contention instead of peace, worldly-mindedness instead of heavenly affections, and dissimulation instead of sincerity. Yet there is even at this time *a remnant according to the election of grace*, and many more than the eye of man can discover. God saw seven thousand in Israel, where Elijah could not find one. This is a consolation; as is also that promise to those who *sigh and mourn* over prevailing abominations, though they cannot cure them. And, if there are so few true Christians, what thanks are due to the Lord if we are such, who are by nature no better than others! What diligence in making our calling and election sure; what activity in doing good; and what patience in tribulation, rejoicing in hope, and fervency in prayer; ought we not to aim at! And how welcome will a world of perfect purity and love be at last! . . . We shall be happy to see you when convenient. Mrs. S. joins me in love to you all. My love to every branch of your family: the Lord make them all branches of his family! My love to all the people and inquiring friends. Tell them to love one another,

and pray for themselves and each other, and for me. With sincere affection and prayers for you,

I remain your friend and servant, T. SCOTT."

The following belong to a later period, but they may be introduced here to finish at once my extracts from this series of letters.

April 7, 1788, he proposes to send "one or two" out of his twenty-five copies of his Bible for the perusal of the poorer people, who cannot afford to purchase it.

"September 9, 1794. I am too much engaged in discharging the large debt, in which Mr. R.'s failure has involved me, to be able to send money (as I otherwise meant to have done,) to help my poor brethren, or rather children, in Ravenstone and the neighbouring places: but, having finished my Essays, I have sent twelve copies to be sold, and the money given away. . . . Should they speedily go off, I shall be glad hereafter to follow them with a similar present; wishing that I had it in my power to show my sincere affection in a more effectual way. . . . I beg all who regard my opinion to do nothing hastily, or without much previous prayer; not to listen to those persons, who will probably attempt to make divisions or proselytes, pretending zeal for some important doctrines; and to endeavour, as much as possible, to keep united as one body, waiting to see what the event may be of these changes; which perhaps cannot at present be well known."

"July 2, 1795. The very high price of bread and other provisions continually reminds me of my poor people at Ravenstone, &c. in respect of their temporal provision. I have not indeed much in my power, but the Lord gives me plenty of things neces-

sary; and I think it my duty, at such a time as this, rather to exceed ordinary rules in helping others, *especially the household of faith*: and none have so good claim on me, as those whom I look on as my children in the gospel, and who I trust will be *my crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ*.”—He sends three guineas, and proceeds: “I wish I could do any thing more effectual to relieve the pressing necessities of a people ever dear to my heart: but I hope they will trust in the Lord both for temporal and spiritual things, and that more entirely in times of trouble. I recommend the sixty-second psalm to their consideration at this time, and the thirty-seventh. Give my love to them all.”

“February 14, 1799. As the Lord hath in pecuniary matters been very kind to me, in an emergency when I was led to expect great difficulties, I think it my duty to make some acknowledgement, by contributing a little to the relief of such of my brethren as are in poor circumstances.” He sends therefore two guineas. . . . “My heart is very much with you, and I do not always forget to pray for you all: but, in this and all other good things, I am too apt to be negligent.”

One more series of letters, from which I shall give a few extracts in this place, presents my father in an interesting connexion with the British and Foreign Bible Society: not indeed with its actual formation, (which was many years posterior to this time,) but with the preceding events which led the way to it. As the historian of that society remarks, “The primary occasion of all those measures, out of which

grew the institution of the British and Foreign Bible Society, was the scarcity of Welsh Bibles in the Principality, and the impracticability of obtaining adequate supplies from the only source existing at that period, whence copies of the authorized version were to be derived;” accordingly his history commences with a correspondence, in the year 1787, “between a clergyman in London, and a brother clergyman in Wales,” which first brought the existing scarcity into notice in England. This London clergyman was my father. Mr. Owen’s first extract is from a letter of his, dated May 15, 1787, which, it will be seen, implies a prior communication from Wales. That communication is in my hands, having accidentally escaped the destruction to which my father consigned nearly all the letters in his possession, previously to his last illness: and it enables me to carry back the history of these events one step further than Mr. O. has done. It is dated March 24, and refers to a still earlier, indeed a *first* proposal from my father. The fact, in short, was this: in soliciting subscriptions from his friends in aid of some benevolent designs which his correspondent was carrying on in the principality, my father called, among others, on the late William Daw, Esq. of Brompton Row, who said, ‘I have a few Welsh Bibles by me’—or, ‘I could procure some’ from what is now denominated the Naval and Military Bible Society: ‘would they be of use to your friend?’ In consequence he proposed the question, and the reply was as follows—probably the first expression of urgent want which was conveyed to London.

“March 24, 1787. You ask me, ‘whether a parcel

of Welsh Bibles would be acceptable.' You could think of nothing more acceptable, more wanted, and useful to the country at large. I have been often, in my journeys through different parts of the country, questioned whether I knew where a Welsh Bible could be bought for a small price; and it has hurt my mind much to be obliged to answer in the negative. There are none to be bought for money, unless some poor person, pinched by poverty, is obliged to sell his Bible to support himself and family. Mr. Williams's Bibles, with notes, are some of them unsold; but the price, 18s., is too high for the poor to command. If you can procure a parcel of them for our poor people, I am sure you will much rejoice the hearts of many, and do them, by the blessing of God, great good. I will promise to dispose of them in the best manner I am able: and I think I could dispose to very good purpose, and make profitable use, of any quantity you could procure for me."

Upon this followed those letters of my father's from which I shall now give extracts.

"May 15, 1787. Dear sir, I received your acceptable letter, which made my heart rejoice, and caused me to render unfeigned thanks to God in your behalf, and the people in your neighbourhood; and to pray for a still further blessing upon your labours, and those of your brethren. May the work of God both sink deeper, and spread wider, till, like the leaven, it *leaven the whole lump!* I have shown your letter to several, and I trust it affected and influenced them in the same manner; and also in another—for *silver and gold I have none* to give; but my friends have. In consequence of what you

write concerning the scarcity of Welsh Bibles, I have received twenty-five from the Society for distributing Bibles among the soldiers and sailors. . . . and, if they approve of your disposal of them, they will send you some more. Besides this, I am collecting money to send you a hundred. I have had assistance from Mr. Thornton in this, and probably shall have more. . . . I trust this will be an acceptable present, and a seasonable supply; and I hope many prayers will be offered up in Welsh for my friends and myself, which is the only recompence we desire, and which we shall highly value."

He mentions the Lock Asylum, then forming, and adds: "Pray for a blessing upon this and all other attempts of your poor brethren in London: and, though we are so distant in situation, yet, being all engaged in one warfare, under one captain, against one common enemy, we may be helpful to one another by prayers, exhortations, and encouragements. Let us therefore endeavour to keep up the communion of saints; and may the Lord give us wisdom, holiness, faithfulness, and usefulness, and at length receive us with, *Well done, good and faithful servants!*

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

T. SCOTT."

June 11, 1787, he states that he has sent the one hundred and twenty-five Bibles altogether; and that the Asylum is opened.—"I am surrounded," he says, "daily with pretty much the same sort of company that my Master was, Luke xv. 1. The Lord grant that I may behave among them in some good measure as he did, and speak to them with the same success! Most people here are very unbelieving about it, and

think no good can be done: but I am enabled to expect great things from the power, mercy, and love of Christ. I would *believe*, and hope to *see the glory of God* in their conversion. Indeed I do see some good fruits; and, though there are many disappointments, and I am often ready to be discouraged, yet upon the whole I think I may confidently say, good is done: and, if God help me to persevere, and neither faint in, nor grow weary of, nor act inconsistently with, my work and office, I trust I may expect a good harvest at last. We have raised money enough to begin with, and I do not wish to have temptations to any thing interested or extravagant. At present I have refused to have any recompence for my trouble, till the experiment be tried, at least; and I hope others also will be as disinterested as they can. I would not have any thing to depend on but God's providence and promise. We want nothing so much as the pouring out of the Holy Spirit for their conversion; and all the rest will be provided for in the Lord's time.

“ You rather misapprehend my situation, in supposing that I have multiplied opportunities of preaching. For my great benefit, I am left with something about me which is very unacceptable among most of the professors of religion. Some things requisite for popularity I would not have, if I could; and others I could not have, if I would. This, together with some suspicions concerning the exactness of my orthodoxy in the point of election, renders even those, who love me the best, shy of asking me to preach. But I feel it is needful and useful to me, and I submit to it, and am thankful for it; for my proud

heart could never have borne popularity properly: indeed few do. I trust I am in some degree useful. I do the work allotted me with uprightness, though with many blunders; should be willing to do more, if called to it; and would be submissively out of employ, if the Lord appoints that for me.—My heart is with you. I pray God to prosper you in your extensive sphere, and make you long a *burning and shining light*—a useful preacher of, and a bright ornament to, the gospel. Begging an interest in your prayers, I remain your affectionate friend and brother,

THOS. SCOTT.”

January 12, 1788, he mentions difficulties in the way of procuring more Bibles.—“I have got upon a new scent, but know not how I shall succeed. If we should have opportunity of buying a quantity, how many dare you engage for?—You need not doubt my willingness to serve you or your people: but at times a man’s *strength is to sit still*, and wait a convenient season. But, as far as I can with propriety procure either the sale or gift of Welsh Bibles, I shall count it my privilege to send them. I am myself very busy, very unpopular, and a *little* useful. I hope to see greater things. Religion of a certain stamp is very fashionable in town, and I get much displeasure for opposing fashionable religion: but I trust God is with me, and that there is an increasing number of helpers.”

April 30, 1788. There had been a “prospect of obtaining, through the assistance of another society, and with the help of Mr. Thornton’s purse, no less a number than a thousand Welsh Bibles: but, alas!” he says, “I have only waited for a disappointment.”



He has, however, the prospect of a few. “I should have been more sorry,” he adds, “at the disappointment, did I not know that it could not have taken place unless the Lord had had wise reasons for permitting it.”

December 22, he states that he had sent a few Bibles, for which, if his correspondent was not prepared to pay without expense to himself, “he would go a begging for it.”

“February 24, 1789. If no unexpected hindrance arises, you will receive, as soon as they can be got ready and sent, another cargo of Bibles, one hundred to give away, at Mr. Thornton’s expense, and the other two or three hundred to sell. . . . I believe that the whole impression of Welsh Bibles is now nearly exhausted; and I would be thankful that the Lord has made me, almost without my having any thought of it, an instrument of bringing a considerable number out of the warehouses, to be disseminated where they were wanted.”

October 19, 1792. A further supply of Bibles had been procured through another friend, and he says, “I trust that the Lord, who hath put it into the hearts of so many in Wales to love his holy word, will also put it into the hearts of their more wealthy brethren in England to use effectual methods of supplying them with Bibles. I have no counsel to offer; but am ready to be active in the good service in any way I can.—I rejoice to hear, that your people go on well, and are a comfort to you: and I think I do feel more willingness than formerly, that others should have the satisfaction of enlarged usefulness, and I the mortification of much disappointment in that respect.”

Letters of a later date announce the new edition of the Welsh Bible in 1799, consisting of ten thousand Bibles, and two thousand additional copies of the New Testament; out of which he appears to have procured eight or nine hundred copies of the whole Bible: and the correspondence closes, May 3, 1800, with observing, “The demand has already so far exceeded the impression, that each person is put off with fewer than he applied for, and thought he had secured.”

## CHAPTER X.

### HIS COMMENTARY ON THE SCRIPTURES.— DEATH OF MRS. SCOTT.

“As I had read over the whole of the scriptures repeatedly, I trust with constant prayer, and considering how almost every verse might be applied, as if I had been called to preach upon it; I had often thought that I should like to preach through the Bible: for instruction from every part crowded upon my mind, as I read and meditated from day to day. While I was in this frame of mind, a proposal was made to me to write notes on the Bible, to be published, with the sacred text, in weekly numbers. On this proposal, I consulted some, who, as I understood, well knew the persons making it, and were themselves respectable characters. I also consulted my own friends, and certainly made it, for some time, a constant part of my prayers to be directed aright concerning it: but I am convinced that I did not deliberate, consult, and pray, so long as I should have done; that I was too hasty in determining; and that a great mixture of self-confidence, and presumption of competency for an undertaking, which, if not already executed, I should at present tremble to think of, combined with my desire of being usefully employed. I had hardly an idea of the arduousness of the work, and of the various kinds of talent and

knowledge which it required; of most of which I was at that time destitute. My inclination biassed my judgment. I must also own, that a guinea a week, with some collateral advantages, which I was to receive, promised to be no unacceptable addition to my scanty income; while twenty-five gratuitous copies of the work would prove a useful present to my different relations; to which purpose I actually applied them. It was also a gratification to my active mind, that the proposed work would give me full employment; which I most of all desired.

“ It never, I own, occurred to me at this time, that any man would undertake a publication, which must, at the lowest computation, cost 2,000*l.*, or 3,000*l.*; and which would require 35*l.* to be paid down every week; relying entirely on the sale of an incipient work of an obscure author to carry him through it! This proved that I knew little of the world: for such presently appeared to be the situation of the projector. Yet none of my friends cautioned me on this ground.

“ After having proceeded so far as to have, beyond expectation, the most encouraging prospects of public acceptance; and having become more and more enthusiastically fond of the employment; I learned, when fifteen numbers had been printed, that, unless money could be procured from my friends, the design must be abandoned. The pretence, indeed, was, that I was likely to exceed the limits proposed, of one hundred, afterwards extended to one hundred and twenty, numbers: but it was manifest, both from the early period of the complaint, and still more by the event, that the money and credit of the pub-

lishers were exhausted.—In these circumstances, I could not bear to think of dropping so promising a design; and I had not courage to venture on executing it on my own account; though liberal offers of pecuniary assistance were made me for that purpose. The best object of my undertaking has been answered far beyond my hopes: but I stumbled on the worst plan, as to secular matters, that could have been adopted; and my vexations, and distresses, and losses, have been a merciful, yet painful correction of my rashness, presumption, and folly.

“It is not worth while to detail the particulars of my perplexities, and temporary resources, and renewed difficulties, and new plans; or of the debts which I contracted, in order to support the sinking credit of the publisher,—for one person only now sustained that character, the other having speedily seceded. Suffice it to say, that, by the help of friends, and by sinking some legacies which came to me, I supported him to the close; though the expense far exceeded calculation, and indeed what would have been the amount in the hands of a prudent and solvent publisher.”

The cost of the first edition (amounting to three thousand copies!) was not less, I believe, than 6,000*l.* or 7,000*l.* The publisher reckoned it at 10,000*l.* or 11,000*l.*

“The work extended, indeed, much beyond its proposed limits, reaching to one hundred and seventy-four numbers instead of one hundred and forty, to which it had been fixed: but all beyond the one hundred and forty numbers I printed at my own expense and risk; and all beyond one hundred and

sixty-four I actually *gave away* to all purchasers of the work who would accept them; though that portion cost me much above 200*l.*

“ At the close I calculated, in the most favourable manner, my own pecuniary concern in the work: and the result was, that, as nearly as I could ascertain, I had neither gained nor lost, but had performed the whole for nothing. As far as I had hoped for some addition to my income, I was completely disappointed: but, as Providence otherwise supported my family, and upheld my credit, I felt well satisfied; and even rejoiced in having laboured, often far beyond what my health and spirits could well endure, in a work which had been pleasant and profitable to me, and which I hoped would prove useful to others.

“ But, alas! much beyond my expectation, my pecuniary difficulties were only commencing, instead of having come to a close. Besides printing, as has been already stated, all the latter part of the work (from the beginning of *St. Luke*,) on my own account, I had advanced the publisher more than 800*l.*—a sum which far exceeded all that I was worth. Still, as the copy-right (which is in such cases usually made the publisher’s,) had been mortgaged, or conditionally resold to me for security of this money, I thought myself safe.—Moreover, as the work was now finished, and sold well, and the publisher had for some months been exempted from all outgoings on account of it; I had little fear of his being unable to stand his ground: and hence I increased my actual loss, which followed, by declining to receive some money that I might have had, because I thought a near relation of his ought to be relieved from the serious embarrass-

ment in which, I was told, he had involved himself in order to serve him.

“ Even my more sagacious friends, and those more conversant with transactions of this nature, were of opinion that the publisher’s credit was so low, that, even in case of failure, his debts could not amount to any large sum: but, in the event, on his executing a deed of assignment to his creditors, (within five months after the Bible was completed,) claims were made on his estate to the amount of above 10,000*l.* Still, however, with the latter part of the work in my possession; and with the copy-right pledged to me, and vested in me, unless redeemed by the payment of all that was my due; it appeared to me, that I could have come in, even before a bill of sale, (which he had given,) and have secured my debt, by rendering all the former part of the work of little value without my concurrence. A statute of bankruptcy would certainly have left me the copy-right, and the concluding part of the work. But I feared that thus to secure payment in full to myself, while scarcely any thing was left to the other creditors, would appear a dishonourable transaction. I said, ‘ I can go on with my ministry creditably, if I lose 200*l.* or 300*l.*; but, if I lose my character for integrity, or even bring it into suspicion, I cannot.’ I consented, therefore, to come in as a creditor under a deed of trust, delivering up all the latter part of the work in my possession, only retaining the copy-right irredeemably. At first, some creditors were clamorous against my proposal: but, the solicitor employed soon showing them their mistake, my offer was acceded to unanimously: and, at the close of the business, I

received from the whole company the unavailing compensation of thanks for my disinterestedness.

“ I at first supposed, as I believe the other trustees did, that a dividend of 7*s.* or 8*s.* in the pound would be obtained: but I never received more than 1*s.* 2*d.* in the pound on my 840*l.*, and that after long delays.

“ Thus all my little property, arising from a legacy of 150*l.* from a relation, another of 100*l.* from John Thornton, Esq., and some others of smaller amount, was sunk as in a vortex; and I was left at least 500*l.* in debt. I lost full 500*l.* by the publication, besides all my labour, and 200*l.* given me by friends in consideration of what had occurred.

“ But what was still worse, I fell into discredit as to the management of secular affairs; of which I felt the effects in rather a mortifying manner a few years after, when the trustees determined to sell off all the residue of the edition. This I could have purchased for 420*l.*; and I was morally certain that it would produce me more than twice that sum, besides precluding all questions about the copy-right: but I could not raise the money. At least, being discouraged by those liberal friends who had before assisted me, I gave it up in despondency,—or rather, I trust, in resignation to the will of God; though aware of the consequences, and constantly affirming, that the loan of 420*l.* at that period would serve me more than the gift of 500*l.* a year afterwards.

“ The whole residue, together with the copper plates from which certain prints accompanying the work had been taken, was in consequence sold, in 1798, for 450*l.*, to a person who purchased it with



permission from me to reprint as much as forty-one numbers, to complete sets, on condition of paying me an acknowledgement of one guinea for each number reprinted. This condition, however, he disregarded; and, on the ground of possessing the copper plates, assumed a liberty of printing at his pleasure,—thus virtually advancing a claim to the copy-right. No bookseller therefore could be expected to engage in a new edition, unless the work were taken entirely out of this purchaser's hands: which led me, about a year afterwards, to inquire the terms on which he would part with what yet remained unsold; when he demanded 900*l.* for it, though he acknowledged that he had already received double the purchase money, and had incurred comparatively little expense!

“ These circumstances, however unfavourable to my temporal interests at the time, have proved a most important benefit to the work. Had I sold it to the booksellers, as I should have done, could I have secured it against encroachment, without having recourse to Chancery; I could hardly have failed of being cramped by them, as to the expensive improvements which I contemplated: but, retaining it in my own hands, I added, in a new edition, fifty sheets to the comment, at an expense of 700*l.*; besides the marginal references, which cost more than 1000*l.* printing.

“ Many, no doubt, have wondered what could induce me to involve myself in pecuniary transactions to the extent I have done, which have required me to contract debts that I have not yet been able wholly to liquidate; and to struggle with difficulties beyond the conception of most persons, and wholly

beside my inclination, and my talent and turn of mind. This may appear the more extraordinary, after I had firmly declined the most liberal offers of assistance, to enable me to take the work out of the original publisher's hands, and to print it on my own account,—on the ground that this would so occupy my mind about pecuniary concerns, as to unfit me for the work itself. But the fact was, I had now no other alternative left, if I would improve the first rough sketch of a work, which I always deemed the grand business of my life. I must either leave the whole to be reprinted by the purchaser of the residue, sheet by sheet, after the old edition, according as one number or another might be wanted; or I must have recourse to Chancery, which I greatly dreaded; or I must print on my own account, which I knew I could legally do.—The very friends also, who before declined advancing me 420*l.*, now offered to lend me considerably more; and some others concurred. The booksellers likewise assured me that, as soon as the work was so far advanced that there were any volumes for sale, it would pay its own expenses. Thus encouraged I ventured to undertake it.

“ For a considerable time all went on well with my new edition. The sale actually answered the expenditure, though that was little short of 1000*l.* a year: and it appeared probable that a profit would accrue to me sufficient to reimburse my former losses. But at length such an enormous rise took place in the price of paper, attended by a considerable advance in the charge of printing, as, together with the additions I made to the work, caused my estimates to turn out nearly 1000*l.* too low; and the sale of the

whole edition scarcely cleared more than prime cost. Indeed every page I added increased my expense, without at all advancing the price of the book, which had been fixed from the first: and I actually paid at the rate of 13*l.* for every additional sheet, for the privilege of improving my work.

“To conclude this subject at once. I have been favoured to live to superintend a third edition; and by that I have fared somewhat better: but, except the sum given for the copy-right since that edition was concluded, I certainly have not cleared so much as 1000*l.* for the labours of above twenty-one years.—I do not, however, regret this. God has provided for me and mine very graciously: by means of this publication my grand design, of accomplishing from the press what I found myself little capable of effecting from the pulpit, has eventually succeeded beyond my expectations: and I needed my trials and difficulties, both to correct the many evils connected with the undertaking, and to counterbalance any flattering circumstances arising out of it.”

This history of the production and publication of my father's Commentary on the Bible was written in the year 1812. Early in the following year all the transactions relative to it were brought under the review of the Court of Chancery, in consequence of the person who had purchased the residue of the first edition asserting a claim to the copy-right, and endeavouring to support an injunction against my father, and the booksellers to whom the work was now sold. The injunction was in the first instance granted; but it was immediately dissolved on the case being heard. I have, in some parts, a little en-

larged and cleared up the narrative, from the report of the proceedings on that occasion. A friend, present in court, wrote to my father as follows, immediately after the decision: "The Chancellor went into all the transactions very minutely indeed; in the course of which he spoke of your conduct, as author, creditor, trustee, and, at one period, proprietor and publisher of the work, in the most honourable terms."—One short extract from the printed report may be given. It was contended by counsel against my father, that one of the agreements into which he had entered with the original publisher was "illegal, as being a *laical dealing*, contrary to the canons:" on which his Lordship remarked, in giving judgment, "Whether it is so or not, I am not now called to inquire; but I think I am not going far out of my way to say, that the laical dealings of a clergyman can never be less the subject of blame, than when they consist in writing, and promoting the circulation of explanatory notes on the Bible."

Previously to this decision, besides all the injury he had suffered in his property, my father and his publishers were assailed by advertisements and placards, strongly reflecting upon their character and proceedings. But the question was now finally set at rest, and the work has been exposed to no subsequent molestation.

This great work of my father's life was begun January 2, 1788; the first number was published March 22, following; and the last copy was finished for the press, June 2, 1792: during which period the whole was twice written over by his own hand. One great error committed was, beginning to publish so

soon after entering upon the composition. This caused the author to be distressingly hurried throughout his whole progress. Sick or well, he was obliged to complete his weekly task ; except as in some few instances he was compelled to plead for a short respite, by the suspension of the publication. I have actually known him, with great difficulty and suffering, prepare as much copy as he thought would complete the current number, and then, when he had retired to bed and taken an emetic, called up again to furnish more, what he had provided being insufficient for the purpose ! It is needless to point out how injurious to a work, as well as distressing to an author, such a hurried execution must be ; and the reader will agree with me in thinking it surprising, that a work, so composed, should have been found to possess such intrinsic merit, and gain such acceptance as it did, even in its most unimproved state. One effect was perhaps on the whole an advantage,—especially as any disadvantages accompanying it have been removed by the author's subsequent indefatigable labours,—namely, that he was compelled, in the first instance to be in so great a degree original ; to give the result of his own reflections almost alone. There was little time to consult, much less to transcribe from other authors.

Some time after the conclusion of the work, the original publisher actually printed all the correspondence which had passed between my father and himself during its progress ; hoping to show that he was injured, and perhaps to drive my father to make him some reparation : but I believe the pamphlet

completely defeated its own purpose, with all who were permitted to see it *entire*.

On the whole we may venture to assert, that all the labour, vexation, and distress which attended this work, were such as never will, nor ever can be known. But it was to answer important ends: and great troubles generally precede great successes. A playful sally of my father's mind may explain the view which he took of his situation, while the work was in progress. The publisher wished that the author's portrait should accompany it: 'No,' said my father, 'if one of us appears, we will both appear together,—upon the same jaded horse, in the middle of a miry lane, in which it may be impossible to decide whether it is more advisable to push forward, or to attempt a return.'

I shall now present the reader with extracts of letters relating to the times and subjects of this chapter.

To the Rev. J. Ryland, June 1, 1789: "My engagements are so many, and my embarrassments have been so great of late, that I have not been able to get on as I ought. My situation is difficult, but not without its usefulness. . . . As my coming to town has introduced me to this (the publication of the Commentary,) and some other things which I trust will be useful, I cannot repent of coming: but I much question whether I can keep my station or not. I have made a bold march into an enemy's country; and, if I cannot make good my ground, I hope I shall be able to make an honourable retreat. I trust you do

not forget to pray for me, for I much need and value your prayers.”

To the same, January 12, 1791. The following extract relates to a small publication, which, like some others, came in, as by a parenthesis, during the progress of the Bible.—“ I have been so engaged that I have almost killed myself. In a discourse which you may see advertised, occasioned by the death of Mr. Thornton, with no name to it, and that never was preached, (on 2 Cor. v. 14, 15,) I have had a considerable hand; and it has cost me the more trouble, because I had not the whole direction of it; though I am answerable for its doctrines. This, added to my other engagements, has made me more than work enough, and I am not well at present. I would not have it publicly avowed that I am the author of the above-mentioned discourse, till a few weeks have elapsed: for there is a peculiar aim in it, at a class of people whom my name would prejudice. . . . .

“ I bless God, that I may take it for granted, that *the law of God*, and not the carnal mind, and its powers and inclinations, is the rule and standard of man’s duty: otherwise I could not preach or write without shackles, on any subject whatever.”

The discourse here referred to was composed at the request of the late Henry Thornton, Esq., who also made several contributions towards it. The reasons which prompted the proposal were these: Mr. H. T. was sensible that many persons contemplated the character and proceedings of his late father with astonishment, and many even with admiration, who had no just conception of the religious principles, which moved him to a course of conduct so unlike

that of men of wealth and extensive business in general; and so much exceeding the ordinary standard even of more serious and pious characters. It appeared to him therefore very desirable to explain the subject to such persons; to take to pieces, so to speak, the machine whose movements surprised them, and exhibit the secret springs by which the effect was produced.

The following extract, addressed to the same friend, on finishing the Commentary, will not fail to interest those who have found edification in the perusal of the work itself.

“ June 26, 1792. I have had my hands full, and my heart too, by ——’s means, and am not likely to be soon rescued from a variety of concerns, in which my connexion with him in this publication has involved me. But he that hath hitherto helped me will, I trust, extricate me from all remaining difficulties: and it was needful that the whole progress of the work should be stamped with mortification, perplexity, and disappointment, if the Lord meant me to do any good to others by it, and to preserve me from receiving essential injury in my own soul. Four years, five months, and one day were employed in the work, with unknown sorrow and vexation: yet, if I have the best success in the sale of it, I can expect no emolument at all, except the profit on the sets I sell; whereas I may lose considerable sums. But I feel quite satisfied on that head: and, if any real good be done to a few souls by means of the whole, I am at present disposed to be thankful, even though I should lose both money, credit, and friends by means of it. I never thought I should live to con-



clude it; and it seems to me as a dream now I have, and I can scarcely think it a reality. Much cause for thankfulness, and much for humiliation, I see, upon the review of the whole transaction. I meant well, but I engaged hastily and made many egregious blunders: yet I hope, through the Lord's goodness, all will end well. I do not think that my health is injured by my intense application; but my spirits are surprisingly broken: and, whereas I used to rise above difficulties, by a certain alacrity and stoutness of mind, which I took for strong faith and much patience, I am now ready to be alarmed and dejected on every occasion; and have shed more tears since I began this work, than probably I did in all the former years of my life."

In this letter he mentions preaching twice one Sunday at Margate. These sermons were productive, in one respect, of rather a singular result. In consequence of the absurd representations of them which were made to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the curate was called up to Lambeth. Having procured, however, of my father, written sketches of the two sermons, which he submitted to his Grace, no more was heard of the business.

The following extracts of letters to his elder sister, relate to his pecuniary losses by the Bible, and his state of mind under them.

"October 25, 1792. I was worth nothing, except my furniture, when I engaged in this work, (the Commentary,) and if, after some bequests made to me, I should be in the same case when it is done with, I may, and I hope I shall say, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of*

*the Lord.* I might have spent my time more unpleasantly, as well as unprofitably, than in the labour I have had; which, in some respects, has been its own reward: and, if any human being gets any real good by it, that forms an additional reason for my being satisfied and thankful: whilst the manifold evil that has connected with the whole business requires forgiveness, and excludes all idea of my being *entitled* to any reward from the Lord; and I must be very ignorant of human nature, to expect much from men for such an undertaking.—I thought you would wish to know the state of my mind under what may be deemed a trial, but which does not much discompose me. I have a fair prospect of paying all their due, and that satisfies me.”

In 1794 he had more fully ascertained the extent of his losses, and he thus writes:—

“ March 4. If I said that I was sorry I had written so much on the Bible, I own it was my infirmity: but I do not recollect that I ever expressed myself so strongly; though the loss of all my little property, and feeling myself encumbered with a debt of 300*l.* or 400*l.*, without any thing to pay it except a very precarious income, did try me for a time very sharply. But I am now quite satisfied, yea, thankful; for various circumstances more and more convince me, that it will in time so acquire stability, and produce durable good effects, that I am aware mortifications by the way were needful for me. The Lord has also peculiarly favoured me this year; and I have emerged at least 200*l.* from my depth of debt within about fifteen months. One friend made me a present of 100*l.* towards my loss. So I say, *As for me, I am*

*poor and needy, but the Lord careth for me : and I have at present no uneasiness about it."*

How deeply he felt the sale of the residue of the original edition, (in 1798,) in the manner and under the circumstances already described may be judged from the following extract: "I would rather have given 1000*l.* for it, could I have raised the money, than let it be so disposed of. It was like the execution of a dear friend: I would not be present; and I believe the other trustees did not take all proper precautions for my security." He evidently anticipated, in some measure, the troubles which subsequently resulted from this step. In another letter however he remarks upon it: "The labour, loss, and disquietude, have been, and are mine; but the profit must be given to others. Yet I doubt not this is ordered in wisdom, faithfulness, and love."

The following passages relate to the preparation of an entire new edition; the first with marginal references. They are from letters addressed to myself.

"March 14, 1798. I am either more indolent than formerly, or I do not stand work so well. I feel a need for the petition which Mr. Whitefield often made, 'that the Lord would keep him from growing slack in the latter stages of his journey.'—I every day however correct something of the Bible, besides preparing the Essays for republication, teaching, &c.; and I feel a strong desire, by some means or other, if I am spared, to have the publishing of it in my own hands, when a new edition is wanted; which will probably be ere long. I seem to think I could make great improvements: and I am more than ever convinced, that a Family Bible, which gains acceptance,

is one of the most effectual vehicles of antidote against all loose views of the gospel, that can be; because it gets into the families of persons who have any seriousness, even where public teachings lean to antinomianism; and may thus greatly counteract the effect."

"February 25, 1800. I am very closely engaged in the business of preparing a new edition of the Family Bible: indeed, it takes as much mending, thus far, as it did in writing."

"March 3, 1800. I have resumed my attention to the Hebrew, and read every part in that, and in the Greek; which often suggests useful hints and cautions. But revising the references in Brown (to make a selection, to be inserted chiefly at the end of each note,) is the great labour statedly occurring."

Before this month elapsed, he informed me, that he had "determined to have a selection of *marginal* references."

"October 29. You say I am in your debt as a correspondent; and indeed I am in the way to be in every one's debt, in this respect as well as others; and here, at least, to be insolvent. I must however not only intreat, but demand, to be dealt with on other terms than many are, as I am *doing a GREAT work*, at least, whether a *good* one or not: and I find, as I proceed, so much wants mending, and I can so little satisfy myself, that I can hardly hope to satisfy others. I work very hard, and yet I do not get on at the rate of more than a sheet and a half in a week; and do not finish any one chapter according to the ideal completeness which I had framed in my mind. I trust the work has thus far been improved much:

and I still flatter myself with the hope of getting on faster presently, and of reducing some parts into a narrower compass : but this has not hitherto been the case. The language is throughout abridged ; but then new ideas are added. . . . I do not think any of you, that make remarks on the different parts of the work, can possibly conceive what it is to keep *the whole* in view, and to finish any chapter as *a part of this whole*. Had I known and felt this formerly as I now do, I should never have dared to engage in a work, for which every day makes me more and more feel my incompetency. Yet, as it has pleased God to give it so much of an establishment, I must now go on, and do what I can. But I must deprecate criticism, especially that of those who are disposed to judge of a chapter as of a short essay, instead of considering of what a vast whole it forms a part. I am however very glad of your observations, sent in the manner they have lately been. They very often suggest improvements beyond what you, perhaps, had in view. . . . Your remarks on Leviticus x. made me, at least, a hard day's work : and yet I do not think you will be satisfied with what I have done. Here especially I note that you seem to have forgotten how I wrote, sick or well, in spirits or out, lively or dull : *the tale of bricks* must be delivered. I agree with you, that great points give the best occasion to practical observations ; but that is when a man has the genius, and is in frame to improve them : and I often feel a sad deficiency in both respects. Indeed, my maturer judgment may correct and improve what I formerly wrote ; but I verily believe I am now inca-

pable of writing, *de novo*, so much to the purpose, and so rapidly, as I then did. I would however query, whether leading the ordinary reader from verse to verse, with useful observations, though not striking to persons of superior cultivation, may not be as beneficial in teaching him to think, and deduce instruction for himself.—But enough of this.”

The close of this passage may be considered as the author's reply to those who have thought, that it might have been an advantage had the Practical Observations, after all particulars had been explained in the notes, taken up the more *general topics* which a review of the whole suggested, rather than again have retraced the passage from verse to verse, which not unfrequently (especially in the Epistles,) leads to a repetition of what had occurred in the explanation. In the historic parts, the plan alluded to is frequently adopted: and hence the most interesting reflections not uncommonly occur on apparently unpromising chapters.<sup>1</sup>

January 27, 1803. I am obliged to you for your hints on some of the Psalms, particularly the xvth and xxiid. I write a great part of the notes over again. I was very ill, and very much discouraged, when I hurried over this part of the work; and, as I am vastly desirous of doing something less inadequate on this most delightful part of scripture, I wish you, with all freedom, to give me your sentiments. A man who reads at leisure, and has a tolerable measure of taste and judgment, will strike

<sup>1</sup> See for example, the Practical Observations on Genesis v.—the catalogue of antediluvian patriarchs.

out thoughts, and ways of stating things, which his equal or superior, in labouring through his daily task, would not hit on."

The observation here made is one to the benefit of which every commentator is certainly entitled. The preacher, or the writer of remarks on particular passages, selects those parts of scripture which strike his mind, and on which he has something, perhaps, more than common to offer: the regular commentator must travel through all alike; and may thus perhaps rise to a less height on many given passages than even inferior men may attain.

In 1807, before the edition in hand was completed, all the earlier volumes were so nearly sold off, that it became necessary to commence a new one. On this occasion the question recurred, whether my father should undertake the publication on his own account, or dispose of the work to the booksellers; and it was again decided in favour of the former plan, for the same reason as before,—that he might be at full liberty to give it every improvement in his power. "It would certainly," he says, "be more agreeable to me to pay all the sums which I owe, and to have no further concern with the *trading* part of the service: but I do not at present feel this much of a burden to me; and I am conscious that I have property sufficient, and more than sufficient to discharge all in due time; and that both the debts and the dealings were the result of a wish to do my best to promote the cause of true religion, and proceeded not either from the desire of worldly lucre or honour, or from a scheming spirit. It was the only possible plan at the time."

The same letter (dated March 11,) gives the following notice of the progress which the work was making on the other side of the Atlantic, and of "a mark of esteem and regard" there conferred upon the author, of which, though he would meet it with a return of respect and gratitude, he never thought it proper further to avail himself.—"I had two letters from North America about three weeks since, in one of which I am informed by a bookseller, that he has twelve hundred subscribers for the Bible, and expects a great many more; and that it is read with approbation by the religious people of all descriptions. As a proof of this approbation, the packet contained a parchment by which I am constituted D. D. by the Dickensonian College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, by persons whose names I never before heard. What use I may make of this honorary distinction is a subsequent consideration: but the whole encourages me to hope that my labour is not in vain."

The letters referred to (which are now before me,) assured him that, "if he could know half the extent of good which had already resulted to the interests of our glorious Redeemer's kingdom in that country, from his Commentary and other works, *his joy would be full.*"

In April 1809, we find the third edition advanced about half way towards its completion. "I was not aware," the author writes, "at the beginning of the former edition, that the nature of the work would render the printing so tedious; (for it never stopped for me one day, except when I lost the preface;) and nine years was far more than I looked forward to: . . .



but three years, that is, a year and a half from this time, may without difficulty finish the present edition. . . . On the whole, I believe few persons would have found courage and pertinacity to struggle through all the difficulties of so vast an undertaking, as compared with my circumstances: and, though many may see, or think they see, mistakes in my manner of conducting the work, on the most careful review, I cannot see how I could, consistently with my principles, and with reserving the copy-right, have done materially better. I have accomplished my object; and am more disposed to rejoice and be thankful, than to complain.”

At the close of 1810, my father contracted with the present proprietors for the sale of the copy-right, for which he eventually received 2,000*l.*, and for the remaining copies of the third edition. The following year they proceeded with a new edition: and near the close of 1812 the injunction against them was obtained, by representations which could not be substantiated. My father wrote concerning it, as follows, January 22, 1813.

“ Could it be established, the consequences would be, the sweeping away of all my little property; the locking up of 5000*l.* expended by the purchasers of the copy-right, besides the money paid me, —which they would have a right to reclaim; and the perpetuating of the first edition, with all its imperfections on its head, to the exclusion of all subsequent improvements; unless some compromise could be submitted to. . . . It is wholly in the breast of one man (the Chancellor) to decide: but that man’s heart is *in the hand of the Lord!* . . . Pray that I may be

enabled to act as it becomes a Christian, and an aged minister of Christ, in the business; and, as to the rest, *the will of the Lord be done!*”

Another extract of about the same date is communicated to me by the Rev. Mr. Mayor. “An instance of his disinterestedness,” says that esteemed friend, “I have before me, when relating the difficulties he was placed in by ——’s suit. Besides the ruin which it would be to his property, which would oblige him to throw himself upon his creditors, and for maintenance upon God’s providence, he laments the heavy loss it would be to the purchasers of the copy-right, and adds: ‘Should he succeed, it would render all my labours in this respect, for the last twenty years, at present useless. But, if God see the work suited to be an instrument for promoting his glory, neither the devil nor his factors can hinder its circulation: if not, let it go to the dogs. As to the rest, were I a poet, I would add another line about authors to those of Virgil,

*Sic vos non vobis vellera fertis, oves, &c.*

If good be done, let both the profit and the credit go to others. I exult that I am not the injurious, but the injured party.” Mr. Mayor proceeds: “From a subsequent letter of the 12th of February, 1813, I could not but admire his perseverance, in preparing a new edition to be printed at some future period, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the present use or emolument to be made of it.”

February 11th, after having been twice in London upon the subject, he says: “I finished my answer to

——'s affidavit, made my own, and signed it on the 29th ult. ; and, after a most wearisome time to body and mind, returned home on the 30th, fully expecting to hear the Chancellor's decision in a few days : but hitherto I have heard nothing. . . . I was very poorly in town, worse than usual, and feared returning home quite ill : but I did not. I have, however, been very weak and low since, as if recovering from a fever ; but I rather get better, and the spring is coming on. Close study, which is too much for me, is, next to prayer, my chief relief from gloomy thoughts : but they are not so much about my temporal vexations, as concerning the reason why God thus contends with me. . . . While fully conscious before Him, that I never meant to injure any man, so many other things recur to my remembrance, as to the presumption of my undertaking, and all the evil attending the whole prosecution of it, that I am often much cast down : yet hope prevails."

The following extracts of a letter addressed to his daughter, two days previously, further illustrate his state of mind at this anxious period.—The first is from another hand.

" February 9, 1813. Your father returned from London very poorly, but, through mercy, not laid up as on former occasions ; for the next day he preached two excellent sermons, on, *Set your affection on things above*, and, *The end of all things is at hand*. The first especially was most admirable."

The next is his own addition to the letter.

" ——— speaks as if a final settlement of ——'s business might soon be expected ; but I am far from being so sanguine. The gross blunders of

my former lawyers, and the clumsiness of the deeds, throw intricacy on what we might think so plain that the event was certain. What the partners are doing I cannot conceive. Eleven days have elapsed since I completed my answer, which I supposed would have been brought into court directly. . . . However I am not anxious. Let who will take property and credit, if the Lord Jesus does but receive my soul! But should it go wholly against me, I shall never more, as far as I can see, have money for *travelling* expences, except unavoidable."

The next letter (dated March 12th,) brought intelligence that the injunction was dissolved. The partners handsomely defrayed all expenses of the suit: and here my father's embarrassments, though not his labours, respecting his Commentary ended.

The first edition of this work, completed in 1792, consisted originally of three thousand copies: but, after all that remained of it had been sold in 1798, for little more than the retail price of one hundred copies, it continued to be reprinted, as different parts were wanted, by the purchaser, and afterwards by others into whose hands it came, and who advertised their reprints as a *third* edition; and was sold exclusively till 1802, and then jointly with my father's editions till later than the year 1814: so that it is making a low calculation to say, that it extended to five thousand copies. The first edition *with references*, commenced in 1802 and completed in 1809, consisted of two thousand: the second, begun in 1807 and finished in 1811, of the same number: the third, which was in the course of publication from

1812 to 1814, of three thousand. The edition, on the revision of which the author laboured from the year 1818 till the very commencement of his last illness, and which is just completed, is in stereotype; and forms, I presume, the largest work ever submitted to that process. It was fully prepared by himself for the press to the end of 2 Timothy iii. 2: and for the remainder he left a copy of the preceding edition, corrected, though less perfectly, to the very end of Revelation; from which the work has been finished, according to his own final directions, and in concert with his family, under the care of a person who had been his literary assistant in carrying it on, and in whom he placed entire confidence.

Besides these English editions, amounting to at least twelve thousand copies, I have received, from an American bookseller of respectability, the particulars of eight editions printed within the territories of the United States, at Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and Hartford, from the year 1808 to 1819, amounting to twenty-five thousand two hundred and fifty copies: besides an edition of the sacred text without notes, but with my father's references, contents of chapters, and introductions to the several books of scripture.

The retail price of all the English copies, taking their number as above stated, (which I believe to be short of the truth,) would, I find, amount to the sum of 67,600*l.*: that of the American copies, to 132,300*l.*: making together 199,900*l.* Probably no theological work can be pointed out, which produced, by its sale during the author's lifetime, an equal sum.

As it has been suggested, that the greater circula-

tion of the work in America may be ascribed to the more free competition in that country, where no copyright could exist, and the consequent lower price at which it might be sold, I will further add, that I find, on a careful calculation, that the average price of the English copies has been under 5*l.* 13*s.* that of the American copies very nearly 5*l.* 5*s.*; and, when it is considered that a much larger proportion of the American copies, than of the English, has been without references; that eight thousand five hundred of the former, and none of the latter, have been in octavo; and that half the American editions have consisted of much greater numbers, (from four thousand to five thousand,) than the English, and could therefore be afforded at a cheaper rate; it will not appear, from this instance, that our transatlantic brethren have so much the advantage of us as may be supposed.

It is also to be observed, that, in the case of these foreign editions “the ox that treadeth out the corn” is completely “muzzled;” no portion of profit whatever being reserved for the author. This is a consideration, however, which gave the author of the work in question no concern. He wrote to do good; in order to which it was necessary to be read: he derived, therefore, unmingled satisfaction from the tidings of the success of his works on the American continent; where he had reason to believe, that an infusion of his plain, practical, scriptural divinity was much wanted, and might prove highly salutary.

To his history of his Commentary my father subjoins the following paragraph: “In the same year that the Bible was begun, my youngest son (Benja-

min) was born, and two years and a half afterwards, in September 1790, my wife died; while my hands were full of employment, and my heart of most overwhelming cares: so that my distress and anguish, at that period, were beyond whatever will be known or conceived by others, at least in this world. But the Lord, in unspeakable mercy, gave me my present wife, who has proved in every respect a blessing to me and my children; a very useful assistant in my various labours; and I trust an instrument of good to numbers.”

I shall add little to what my father has here said upon this subject. Of the overwhelming distress which he felt on my mother's decease, I could bear striking testimony: and many could join me in declaring the tender affection with which he ever cherished her memory. If any one should be ready to think the fact of his marrying again, within much less time than is usual, an evidence to the contrary, I confidently affirm that such a person is mistaken; and I fully believe that, if the whole case could be fairly laid before a wise and impartial judge, he would justify my father's conduct. Let it be considered in what circumstances he was left—with four children of an age peculiarly requiring superintendence—without any person to take charge of them superior to a servant—himself involved in labours and struggles, sufficient, one would imagine, not only to occupy all his time, but to wear down his health and spirits—his habits so perfectly domestic, that he never thought of seeking relaxation out of his own doors, unless it were in a short walk, and one evening in a fortnight in meeting his clerical brethren in a private society.

To them he submitted his case and the question of his marriage: they did not disapprove the measure, and he determined upon it. His situation was peculiar; nor was his character quite of the ordinary standard. I am persuaded he acted rightly, and that the blessing of heaven followed the step he took. Indeed, no person could be more happy than my father was, in both his marriages. Of the person who formed the object of his second choice, as she survives him, I shall say nothing more, than that the whole family concurs in the sentence which my father pronounced on his dying bed, "That she had been an unspeakable blessing to him and his for more than thirty years."

I annex a few letters connected with the changes which have thus been adverted to. They are valuable in themselves, and tend further to illustrate the character of the writer.

The following letter announced the death of my dear mother to her sister, and through her to the rest of her family.

"Chapel Street, September 9, 1790. Dear sister, I should be glad to spare you, and our poor aged mother, and my other friends in Northumberland, the pain and sorrow which this letter must occasion: but it must not be. Your dear sister is gone to heaven before us; and has left many, and me especially, and her children, selfishly to lament, that she is no longer a sinner or a sufferer, and almost to wish her back again. She was taken, about a fortnight ago, with apparently a slight indisposition in her stomach, which it was thought some trivial medicines would remove; but it proved obstinate, and at length ter-



minated in fever and nervous delirium, and baffled every effort of the medical gentlemen who kindly attended her. She died yesterday a little after seven in the evening.—I see, and trust you will see, and submit to the hand of the Lord in this most painful dispensation: and I would study how to get comfort under it, and derive benefit from it. But my heart rebels against my judgment frequently; and I feel my loss to be so great, that gloom and distrust rush in. Yet the Lord can make it up to us by his own all-sufficiency.—I can truly say, that, during the fifteen years and three quarters that the Lord hath lent me this loan, I have valued it more and more daily. In every sense, she has been a blessing to me, even as a minister, as well as a Christian: and few persons have died more generally and justly lamented by all that knew her. But *the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord!* I would say so from my heart: though it aches when I attempt it.—The last time she had the clear use of her faculties, she expressed the fullest joy and confidence in the Lord, and assurance, that, if she died, she should go to be with Christ: and she wished me to say to all her friends, as her last advice, that they would never know happiness, till they left all other dependences and vain pursuits, to seek salvation and comfort by faith in Christ crucified, and in communion with God through him. She was greatly rejoiced by your last letter: but she would have said a good deal to brother —— about the snares of the world, and the danger of *willing to be rich*, if he had stood by her bed-side. I must leave it to you to break the melancholy subject to our mo-

ther, as you see best. . . . My dear unknown sister, to whom I sincerely wish all happiness for my poor wife's sake, this world, believe me, is a bubble: we shall soon be in the same situation with her: let us then seek the one thing needful more diligently, even that good part which shall never be taken away."

To the husband of the same correspondent, April 4, 1791. "I should have written before this, had it not been for my excessive engagements; notwithstanding that I was aware you and other friends in the north would not be very well pleased with the step which you have heard I have taken. But, whatever you may suppose, I certainly acted most conscientiously in what I did; and, I doubt not, this will appear in the day when all the motives of all actions shall be made known. A variety of peculiarities in my situation, disposition, &c. rendered it necessary for me to deviate from the etiquette of human custom, if I would go on with my many and important undertakings with a quiet mind. I have no doubt that your dear deceased sister, could she come to give her opinion, would sanction my conduct. . . . No body, that knows me, and my behaviour to her from the time we met till that most distressing hour of my life when the Lord separated us for a season, will suppose that my conduct arose from want of love to her, or of respect for her memory; which will be dear to me to my latest hour. . . . I can only add, that I shall always be glad to see, or hear from, or do any service to any of you, as much as ever; and I have not forgotten my proposal made to my mother last year, as I mean shortly to evince. Whenever you come to London, you will meet with as hearty a

welcome in my house as ever, if you will favour me with making it your home. . . . My most affectionate and dutiful remembrances to my mother Kell. May the Lord be her support and comfort under the infirmities of her old age, and in the hour of death, and her portion for ever. I seldom forget to pray for you, that you may be all made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; that we may be there united for ever, after the various changes and troubles of this sinful world.”

The following letter he addressed to his deceased wife's mother.

“August 5, 1791. Honoured madam, Unexpected incidents, arising from the expensive publication in which I am concerned, have rendered it inconvenient to me to send the enclosed 10*l.* sooner; though the delay has grieved me. I understand that you now reside with brother ———; yet there may be many little matters, tending to the comfort of your advanced age, that you may wish for, and should have in your power. Probably as the providence of God hath ordered matters, you and I may never meet in this world; but your present comfort and future felicity are and must be near my heart, for the sake of your valuable daughter,—now a saint in glory, surrounded with her three children that went thither before her, as I am fully satisfied. Whilst it pleases God to continue your life and mine, you may be assured of the same sum every year, and probably earlier next year than I have at present been able to send it; and I hope you will oblige me by receiving it without hesitation: else you will add another sorrow to the many I have experienced. If you knew

all that God knows of the circumstances in which I have been placed, you could not blame, you would approve of the step I have taken, since it pleased God to take your dear daughter to himself. Situated and engaged as I was, it was literally impossible for me to proceed in any other way . . . . . I remain, dear madam, with sincere affection, and good wishes and prayers for your present and future felicity, your's affectionately and respectfully, THOMAS SCOTT."

I add one more extract, from a letter addressed, like the first, to my mother's sister, and dated January 23, 1793.

"It cannot have given any person more satisfaction than it has done me, that the Lord put it into my power to add any thing to the comfort of the aged mother of her, who was so long my choicest earthly blessing, and whose memory must ever be dear to me. Though I have never seen her, I cannot but feel a measure of filial respect and affection for her, as well as love for you and your's: and I should rejoice at the opportunity of conversing with you, if the Lord saw good. But that is not likely in present circumstances. My desire therefore and prayer are, that we may be found amongst those, whom Jesus hath *redeemed unto God with his blood*, and may meet in heaven to spend together a joyful eternity. We are all poor sinners, in our best estate; and they who know their own hearts most, and are best acquainted with the spiritual law of God, will be most ready to make allowance for others, as well as most prepared to value the atonement, grace, and salvation of our divine Redeemer: and thus alone can we be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. You have

no reason, therefore, to write with timidity to such a poor, weak, wretched sinner as I am. The Lord hath shown me a little of his glorious salvation, and I bear witness, in a feeble manner, to his preciousness, his power, truth, mercy, and grace: but I have no reason to assume any precedence above the feeblest of his disciples; and he alone makes me to differ from the vilest of his enemies; and must preserve that difference, if it continue—as I trust it will. . . . I send you all the numbers to complete three copies of the Bible. . . . I sent the third copy for my mother, at my late dear wife's desire. If then you have sold it, the money is properly her's: and I hope you will employ it in any way for her comfort, and that you will fairly tell me, whether any more can at all alleviate her sufferings in her present state. Depend upon it, neither I nor my family shall be hurt by it. Give my dutiful love to her, and tell her that it is my fervent prayer, that the Lord would be her support, comfort, teacher, and saviour; and that at last she may, in humble and lively faith, commend her soul, as Stephen did, into the hands of the Lord Jesus; that so we may all meet in heaven. . . . I remain your sincerely affectionate brother,

THOMAS SCOTT."

At a subsequent period the families were connected by fresh ties.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ADDITIONAL PARTICULARS FROM THE CLOSE OF THE FIRST EDITION OF HIS COMMENTARY TO THE EVE OF HIS REMOVAL FROM LONDON.

IN giving a connected view of the transactions relative to my father's Commentary on the scriptures, we have unavoidably been carried forward beyond the regular series of events, even past the time of his removal from London. He himself, indeed, has recorded little in his narrative concerning this whole period, beyond what is already before the reader. Some particulars, however, may be collected, especially from his letters, which must not be omitted in the history of his life.

We may first advert to the several works which he published within the period assigned to this chapter, and which may be mentioned in two or three classes.

His "Impartial Statement of the Scripture Doctrine in respect of Civil Government, and the Duties of Subjects," was published near the close of 1792; his "Rights of God," (a title suggested by the eager discussions then carried on concerning *the rights of man*,) in 1793; and his "Vindication of the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, and the Doctrines contained in them, in Answer to Mr. Paine's Age of Reason," in 1796. These publications were directed against the infidel and anarchical principles at that time so widely diffused in the nation. "The Rights of God"

was undertaken, and the title adopted, at the suggestion of another person. Probably the title was not well chosen, and the work attracted less notice than, perhaps any other production of its author. The two other pieces were repeatedly printed, (particularly the Answer to Paine, in America as well as at home,) and obtained a pretty wide circulation. Some things concerning them may be collected from the author's letters.

His sending the first mentioned tract to his dissenting friend, now Dr. Ryland of Bristol, gave occasion to the expression of some of his political sentiments, particularly as connected with the duties of Christians.

“ December 5, 1792. You will receive with this a few copies of a publication on a subject mentioned in your last: not on politics, but on the religious question connected with them. I have endeavoured to be impartial; and I do not expect to please either party in these violent times: but I trust moderate men will approve most of it, as far as they regard the Bible. I am no great stickler for monarchy, or any of its appendages; and I trust I am a steady friend to real liberty, in all cases and places: yet, as human nature is constituted, I am apt to think a limited monarchy, or mixed government, where one branch oversees and checks the others, is best; and that an absolute republic must verge either to anarchy or to oligarchical tyranny. But I have nothing to do with such questions. I should obey under a republic even as under our constitution, if providence placed me under it. I also think that our constitution is like a good old clock, which wants cleaning, regulat-

ing, and oiling; but that to knock it in pieces, in order to substitute a new French watch in its place, the going of which has not been tried, would be impolitic and even ridiculous: yet multitudes are bent upon this, and I fear bloodshed will be the consequence. I must also think that many religious and respectable dissenters have expected too much, in a world of which the devil is styled *the god and prince*; and where protection and toleration seem the utmost that God's children can hope for. Many also, both dissenters and others, have meddled too much with such matters: and I grieve to see that the prejudice, which this has infused into the mind of religious people in the church, is likely to widen our unhappy divisions: for they will not make proper discriminations. . . . My sentiments on our duties you will see in the pamphlet: so far, I trust, we shall be agreed: and, if our political creed be not identically the same, I hope that will make no difference. I always thought you so engaged in the work of the ministry, and in promoting the kingdom of Christ, as to bestow little time about other governments; and I trust you will be so still.—I am so far from wishing that Dr. Priestley had been burned at Birmingham, that I am grieved that such weapons should have been at all used by those who pretended to be friends, either to the doctrines of Christ, or to the constitution. I am sorry also, that the persons you mention are so vehement. *An enemy hath done it.* As far as I have influence I would be a peacemaker: we have enemies enough, and should not quarrel with each other."

To the same, December 24, 1792. "I entirely



agree with you, that many things want mending among us : but I fear the governed are as much to blame as the governors. The nation indeed is a mass of corruption ; and throwing it into a new form will not mend it. If North America prosper under her new government, the cause is principally to be found in the moral state of the inhabitants. The way for the people to reform the government obviously is, by choosing, without any recompense, the most honest men they can find, for members of parliament : but, if the senators' votes are bought by ministers, the electors' votes are bought by senators, not only in the rotten boroughs, but in capital cities, and counties ; and almost every voter, like Esau, sells his birthright, and then is angry that he has it not. If we could see that the counties and large cities and towns made an honest use of their privilege, and that bribery was the effect of inadequate representation, I should then be of opinion that a reform would do good ; at present, I fear it would make bad worse, at least no better : for who almost is there that does not vote from interest rather than from judgment. I fear we are nearly ripe for vengeance : my views are gloomy : but I think that every violent change would accelerate our ruin.

“ I am rather a favourer of a limited monarchy ; but would not be severe on a merely speculative republican ; though I think silence, in that case, is a duty, while the providence of God continues us under a monarchy : and I can find nothing in history that should render any but the ambitious warrior, or the avaricious merchant, fond of a republic. I am sure that republican Greece, Rome, and Carthage, shed

human blood, and multiplied crimes, to increase wealth or extend conquest, even as much as absolute monarchs: and their intestine oppressions and divisions were equally calamitous.”

It is to be remembered that, at the period when this letter was written, one of the dogmas attempted to be imposed upon a deluded people was, that all wars were to be traced to the ambition of *kings*.—In these letters also the writer appears rather to have softened down the expressions of the preference which he entertained for the British constitution: at least that preference was certainly more decided and strong at a later period.—It need scarcely be said, that a man of my father’s principles and discernment was never in any danger of being duped, by the boasting pretensions and high expectations which accompanied the earlier periods of the French revolution. He always held, that, proceeding as it did upon irreligious principles, and being founded in false views of human nature, no good was to be expected from it, otherwise than as a remote consequence.

“In respect of the Test Act,” he proceeds, “I would certainly abolish it, let what would be the consequence; because I deem it the scandal of the church: but, if I were a dissenter, I think I should care less about it, for as a *religious* body the dissenters will be less led into temptation, when abridged of their right in this particular, than if freely admitted to places of trust and profit: and I may be deemed censorious, but, I fear, a loss of spirituality renders them more earnest in this matter than their forefathers were. As to the supposed preference of the episcopalian ministers who preach the gospel, I see little of

it. Here, at least, we most of us have less salaries and more work than our dissenting brethren. Some few in the church, indeed, by family connexions, and other means, get large livings; but probably they would be better without them: and, except by family connexions or bought livings, we are almost as much out of the way of preferment as our dissenting brethren. For my part, I scarcely know what I am except chaplain of the Lock; but I expect, at least, that a good living will be offered to you as soon as to me: and it will then be soon enough to say, whether I would accept of it. However, I trust I speak as a Christian minister, when I say, that toleration and protection are all that God's servants can reasonably expect in the devil's world: and in fact this is all they should desire. But I fear one effect of these disputes will be, the widening of the breach between the servants of Christ in the establishment and out of it. Far be it from me to vindicate the madness of a mob; but I do not suppose that either the king or the sober part of the church are to blame for it; more than the moderate men at Paris for the late massacres. Many dissenters, chiefly (would I could say wholly) of the Arians and Socinians, have made themselves obnoxious to those who are attached to the present constitution: others have not acted discreetly; and parties always are violent against whole bodies of men: they who run into one extreme drive others into the opposite: moderate men please no party, and their voice cannot be heard: thus the war of the tongue and the pen is the prelude to greater outrages; which are rather chargeable on human depravity, than on the principles of the party that commit them. I fear, as well

as you, lest our governors should be too tenacious, and rely too much on the temporary advantage they have gained: yet I see there would be impolicy in timid counsels. I feel that they cannot safely at present offend such numbers as a proper retrenchment of expenses would occasion: and I am so sensible of the importance of their measures, and of the peril and delicacy of their situation, that I can only pray to the Lord to give them wisdom to apply proper remedies to the distempered state of the nation, if so be it may be healed. A war at any rate must be dreaded at present: but, could I suppose administration so impolitic as to engage in a war in order to exterminate republicans on the continent, I should then make up my mind on the business, and prepare for the worst. But I do not think they mean this: and how far it may be unavoidable for them to support the Dutch, I cannot tell. I am sure, if I could be heard, I should say to all the powers in Europe, Unite in telling the French Convention, that if they will let other nations alone, and quietly settle their own government as they please, they shall not be molested: but that, if they will be busy bodies in other men's matters, they must take the consequences. . . . As to the weight of taxes it is so great, that most of us feel and lament it: yet freedom from war in our borders, from bloody persecution, from famine and pestilence, should render us patient and thankful. Nor can the evil be prevented. I have now written a long letter, on what I often think of, but do not frequently discuss. Let us, my brother, leave worldly people to their disputes about worldly subjects: let us avoid all attachments to parties, and the

extremes of all parties: let us endeavour to act as peacemakers, especially in the church, and deem ourselves far more nearly united in the bond of faith to all who love Christ, than we can be to those of our party, either religious or political, who do not. Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and give up ourselves to the work of our ministry, and then we shall be useful and comfortable at all events. I am, your sincerely affectionate friend and brother, T. S.”

Mr., now Dr., Carey was at this time seeking permission to proceed to India as a missionary; and I find the following notices of the subject in this correspondence of my father’s with Dr. Ryland.

“ April 24, 1793. Mr. Carey brought me your letter, and I wrote to Mr. Grant about the business; which was all I could do, as every one of my friends would have referred that matter to him.”

“ May 6, 1793. Mr. Grant expresses the most cordial desire to serve Mr. Carey. I am sure I cordially approve of the plan, and pray God to give success to it: for, if sinners are but brought to repent, believe in Christ, and walk in newness of life, I am satisfied: and I am quite willing that the Lord should work by what instruments he pleases, and rejoice that they are multiplied.”

Of the answer to Paine my father thus writes, April 26, 1796. “ I have interwoven all the grand proofs of revelation, and the nature and tendency of Christianity, with I trust a sufficient confutation of Mr. P.’s cavils. I have not treated him quite so genteelly as the Bishop of Landaff has; who, by the way, has said many good things, though he seems to give up the point as to the entire inspiration of scrip-

ture, and pretends not to answer objections to the doctrines: but while I have endeavoured strongly to expose Mr. P.'s disingenuousness, and ignorance of his subject, I hope I have been kept from a harsh spirit, and from retorting his revilings."

On reprinting the work in 1798, the author made "retrenchments," as well as alterations, thinking it "no longer necessary to squabble" with his antagonist, "where he advances objections peculiar to himself," though he "did not wish to have the answers to more general objections out of print."

The last separate publication of my father's life was a new and abridged edition of this work, at the beginning of the year 1820, accommodated to the change of times which had taken place. As he had entirely re-written it, and, "while he greatly abridged it, added much new matter, and several striking quotations, especially from Bishop Watson," he says, "it may, indeed, more properly be considered as a new publication on the subject, at the close of his life and labours, than merely as an abridgment.

The "Essays on the most Important Subjects in Religion," twenty-five in number, were published in the years 1793, 1794; "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress with Original Notes," in 1794, 1795; the twenty-one "Sermons on Select Subjects," with some Prayers for families annexed to them, in 1796; "The Warrant and Nature of Faith in Christ Considered," in 1797; and "Four Sermons on Repentance unto Life—The Evil of Sin—The Love of Christ—and The Promise of the Holy Spirit," in 1802.—In all these works the author's aim was to explain and illustrate the

great truths of Christianity, and to point out their holy tendency. They have all been repeatedly printed; particularly the Essays eight or nine times in England, besides American editions. This appears to have been, very justly, a favourite production, both with the author and the public. It, as well as the Pilgrim's Progress, was first published in numbers: each Essay forming a separate number, price one penny; and the period of publication being once a fortnight. March 14, 1798, the author writes, "I compute that I have printed nearly one hundred and twenty thousand numbers: about one hundred and five thousand I have sold: the rest I have dispersed"—that is, given away, or scattered in his walks and journeys; for in this way he was always a considerable distributor of tracts. One of these Essays, "on the Ten Commandments," is also on the list of the Religious Tract Society, and is widely circulated through that channel.

The Sermons were undertaken at the instance of Mr. Wilberforce and the late Mr. Henry Thornton, and were published by subscription.—The "Treatise on Faith" was composed, as the titlepage expresses, "with reference to various controversies on the subject." In a letter written at the time (Dec. 29, 1796,) the author says: "I am about to write a pamphlet on the sinner's *warrant* to believe in Christ, and the *nature* of justifying faith, by the desire of several of my brethren; as the American divines, especially Hopkins, with those who hold the negative of the modern question, have run into one extreme, and many others into the contrary, particularly Mr. Abraham Booth in a late publication entitled "Glad

Tidings." I do not mean to engage in controversy ; but to state what I think the scriptural view of the subject, clearing it from objections, and guarding against abuses, or answering arguments, without taking notice of the individuals who have urged them."

The *modern question* here mentioned, but happily unknown in many parts of the kingdom, is no other than this, whether it is the *duty* of a sinner to believe in Christ, or to yield any spiritual obedience to the calls of God's word ! and consequently whether he is to be exhorted to any such obedience !

In the year 1798, several clergymen in the metropolis, impressed with the serious aspect of our affairs as a nation, " agreed together to preach, in rotation, weekly lectures in each other's churches and chapels," bearing upon the subject : and in the following year my father drew up at their request, and published with their approbation, " Observations on the Signs and Duties of the Present Times." These lectures were continued till 1802, when the peace of Amiens was concluded, and my father then closed them by preaching and printing a sermon on Psalm cxvi. 2, " Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." Besides these, he published fast sermons in 1793 and 1794, and a thanksgiving sermon in 1798 ; and sermons of the same description were included in the volume already noticed.

One sermon may deserve to be more particularly mentioned, because of the occasion which produced it. In the year 1800 was formed " The Society for Missions to Africa and the East, instituted by Members of the Established Church ;" which designation has been



since exchanged for that of “The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East.” The prosperity to which this institution has attained; the extent of its operations; and the divine blessing which has so evidently rested on its labours; cause it now to draw the attention of the Christian world, and dispose us to inquire, with feelings of interest, into its origin. The honour of giving it birth belongs to my father in common with several dear friends, with whom he esteemed it one of the chief blessings of his life to be associated. Among these (to mention no surviving ones,) were the Rev. Messrs. Newton, Foster, Cecil, Venn, Goode, and that distinguished layman, Mr. Henry Thornton. Mr. Venn, indeed, has been pronounced the father of the Society: and, if to have taken a very active and zealous part in its first formation; to have had, perhaps, the principal share in organizing and moulding it into shape, and in conducting it through certain delicate and difficult intricacies which it had to encounter at its outset; entitles him to this appellation, it certainly belongs to him. But, if to have been one of the first and most urgent in pressing upon his brethren the duty and necessity of forming some such institution, as well as among the most active in carrying the design into effect, establishes a right to such a distinction, then must my father be allowed to *share* it with him. And accordingly he was thus commemorated in the Report of the Society made at its last anniversary. The fact, I believe, is this: the London Missionary Society, then recently formed, had attracted great public notice, and excited much discussion. Among other places, this was the case in a private society of

clergymen meeting once a fortnight for friendly discussion; and the ground which my father, whose mind had always been peculiarly alive to such subjects, there took was this—that it was their bounden duty to attempt somewhat more than they had done, either by joining the Missionary Society just mentioned, or, which was much to be preferred, if practicable, by forming a new one among members of the establishment: and from these discussions sprang the Church Missionary Society. My father says of it, in a letter dated Oct. 29, 1800: “I had a considerable share in setting this business in motion, and I should wish to try what can be done: but I am apt to fear, that, like most of my plans, it will come to little.” It is needless to say with what joy and gratitude he lived to see these fears dispersed, and all his expectations exceeded.—So long as he continued in London, he acted as the secretary of the Society; and, in the country, at a subsequent period, (as we shall hereafter have occasion to relate,) he became the tutor of its missionaries. At the anniversary, Whit-Tuesday, 1801, he was called upon to preach the first sermon before the Society; which was published with the Report.

I shall here insert the commemoration of his services above alluded to, as made at the anniversary meeting of the Society in 1821, a few weeks after his death.

“In recording the gratitude of the Society to its living and active friends, the committee are reminded of the departure to his eternal rest of one who may be justly denominated a father of the Society. The late Reverend Thomas Scott, with his once active coad-

jutors and brethren, Mr. Venn and Mr. Goode, along with the late Mr. Terrington, (a steady and assiduous member of the committee for the last eighteen years) —gone also to their reward—may be truly said, with others who are still spared to labour, to have laid, in faith and prayer, the foundation of that edifice which is now rising to view with augmented strength and usefulness every year. As the first preacher before the Society, and for its first two years its secretary, our departed friend,—with that comprehensive knowledge of the heart and of scripture, which stamped on his sentiments an early maturity, that for almost half a century grew more mellow, but without withering or decay,—laid down for us those principles of action, stimulated us by those motives, encouraged us by those promises, and suggested those practical measures, the truth and wisdom of which are receiving fresh evidence every returning year. When he could no longer take a personal share in our deliberations and proceedings, he still rendered to the Society the most important aid, by charging himself with the instruction of several of its missionaries. We have heard, in this place, from their own mouths, the most grateful testimony to his able instructions and his paternal care: and when his growing infirmities had disqualified him for this labour of love, he ceased not, to his latest hours, to pour out fervent prayers for the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, on all the labours both of this Society and of every other kindred institution, which, in these latter days, is made instrumental in accomplishing the purposes of divine mercy toward the world. *He rests from his labours, and his works follow him.*”

Within the period of which we are treating, my father also projected some works which he never accomplished. One was to be on the Prophecies, and the evidence furnished by them for the divine inspiration of the different parts of scripture. It appears that he first conceived the idea of such a work in 1793. In 1796 he informed me that he had "in good earnest set about it." His plan was to make it, in some respects, more comprehensive than Bishop Newton's Dissertations, and throughout more adapted to unlearned readers. He intended to publish it in small numbers, after the manner of his Essays; and hoped by this means to obtain for it considerable circulation, and to render it conducive to counteract the scepticism and infidelity of the times. But other more pressing engagements coming on, the design was first suspended, and then dropped.

Another work, which I must much regret his not having executed, was of my own suggestion, on my entering into orders. It was to be a series of letters on the pastoral office and its various duties. He entered heartily into the design: and, being prevented from accomplishing it at that time, resumed it on his youngest son's ordination, but never found leisure to carry his purpose into effect.

In 1796, as also in some subsequent years, the health of his family requiring them to spend some time at the seaside, he was led, with advantage to his own health, to make numerous voyages in the packets between London and Margate: and this circumstance gives us occasion to present him to the reader in a new situation. His conduct amid the

motley groupe on board of these vessels was strikingly characteristic, and produced a variety of interesting or amusing occurrences, of which I can furnish but a slight account. He determined, if possible, to make the scene, on which he was entering, an occasion of usefulness. Instead, therefore, of retiring within himself, in a sort of dignified silence, as a clergyman might feel inclined to do under such circumstances, he sought conversation. He observed and inquired into all that passed; made himself acquainted with all the parts of the vessel, and the process of managing it, the course steered, and the various objects to be noticed. He held himself ready to take advantage of all that occurred. He rebuked immorality, and encountered scepticism and infidelity (then, as at present, frequently avowed,) wherever they presented themselves. Thus he aimed to gain attention, and to find an opening for the instruction which he desired to convey. In general he succeeded. Frequently he entered into argument against the corrupt principles of the day, both religious and political; on which occasions, by uniting, as he could readily do, much vivacity with his accustomed force, and always maintaining good temper, (for he determined that nothing should affront him,) he generally drew a company around him, carried conviction to many bystanders, and often silenced his opponents. The discussion commonly terminated in a distribution of tracts, chiefly his own publications, which he always carried with him in travelling, for the purpose. His maxim was, that, if his books sold, he could afford such a dispersion; if they did not, he was only giving away waste paper. It may be added, that his con-

duct on board gained him much esteem among the sailors, who always welcomed him, and described him as ‘the gentleman whom nothing could make angry.’

Though however he would never be offended himself, even by scurrility and abuse, yet he sometimes deeply offended others, by reproving their impiety, or exposing their attempts to defend what was contrary to good morals. One instance it may be amusing to mention, as furnishing a specimen of the coarseness with which he was sometimes assailed. A man, who it appeared was a brewer in London, having for some time endeavoured, in his way, to support the cause of irreligion, and feeling himself foiled by my father’s arguments and animadversions, at length so far lost his temper, as to wish that he ‘had him, and a dozen more such parsons, at his disposal—he would boil them in his copper!’ Such an ebullition had, of course, the effect of raising the voice of the whole company against its author; who, in consequence, withdrew, and was seen no more during the remainder of the voyage.

On other occasions, the result was very different; and once, at least, at the request of the company, he expounded and prayed with them in the cabin, while the vessel lay at anchor.

Few of us, I presume, would feel ourselves competent to adopt such a line of conduct, in a similar situation: but let us not therefore censure what is above our reach. In one who could worthily sustain this part, and was induced to do so by zeal for God and unfeigned love for the souls of men, I must pronounce it highly honourable. We may venture to say also that it is borne out by the highest examples. What

other than this was the mode of teaching employed by the prince of the philosophers, by one of the chief of the apostles, and by Him who was greater, beyond comparison, than all sages, and even than all inspired apostles?"<sup>1</sup>

I subjoin an extract of a letter relative to one of these voyages.—“ After a rather turbulent passage, in which I learned a little more of the seafaring life than heretofore, I arrived safe at Greenwich this morning at half past six, and got home about eight. . . . I had a more impressive sense of a rough sea yesterday than ever before. Most of the company were completely sick, and many needlessly alarmed. I was neither, and kept chiefly on deck, admiring, but not very warm. In the night the only tenable post I could obtain was the floor, with a pillow. Here I had some pleasant thoughts of Him who, wearied by the labours of one or two days, went into a ship, and was asleep on a pillow even during a tremendous storm: and, had not my feet and legs been very cold, I believe, notwithstanding all, I should have had a better night than any during my stay at Margate. Indeed I had an *easier* night, because I could lie down, though I could sleep little. Every ten minutes at least the vessel tacked with great noise, and shifted from one side to the other, so as almost to throw one across the cabin, shaking and breaking the bottles, and once throwing down the light: so that, in whatever posture I composed myself, I was immediately disturbed out of it. However, I kept my humble station very cheerfully till after four in the morning. . . . So much

<sup>1</sup> See the Memorabilia of Socrates; the Acts of the Apostles, particularly xvii. 16—18, and xxvii; and the Gospels, passim.

for my voyage ; which may be more entertaining to you than it was to me, in some respects at least. But I love to see and experience a little variety, provided no durable bad consequences are produced."

His exposition on board the packet is reported in a letter of June 27, 1796: the passage he took, Luke x. 25—37, "The afternoon," he says, "had been spent in cards, singing, dancing, and romping: so that I was led back thirty years in my life; except that I was a mere spectator. . . . I bore my testimony to the truth, and entered a full protest, general and particular, against the things I witnessed, as grossly wrong."



## CHAPTER XII.

### LETTERS BELONGING TO THE PERIOD OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

HAVING thus detailed such particulars as I have been able to collect relative to the time that my father continued in London after the completion of his Commentary, I shall now present the reader with various additional extracts of letters, illustrative of his ministerial situation, his views, and the state of his mind at that period.

To his correspondent in Northumberland, the distant connexion by marriage, already repeatedly mentioned, he thus writes.

“ September 3, 1794. The years that you were more immediately acquainted with me, were certainly the most comfortable, in respect of religion, that I ever experienced. I, as well as you, have since made many painful discoveries about my own heart, and have had far more acquaintance with the devices of Satan than I then had: yet *hitherto the Lord hath helped*; and the grand principles, which I then inculcated, rise in my estimation every year: nor can that, which really humbles us, eventually do us harm. . . . My situation as a minister is replete with difficulties, and I do not see the fruits of my labours as I used to do; yet I trust I do not labour in vain . . . . . We have a peaceable habitation and, after all humiliating circumstances, are favoured with the

intimate friendship of some of the most excellent of the earth. Nothing but sin and the effects of it could prevent our happiness: for, though I am often very poorly with the asthma, and other complaints, and my wife is far from healthy; that would not mar our comfort, if we could live a more holy life. But happiness is reserved for heaven; and hope, with a few earnest, must suffice on earth. We are patients in an hospital; regimen, medicine, and cure are at present chiefly to be attended to; we shall shortly be discharged cured, and that will eternally make up for all. In the mean time we must continue to live by faith in our crucified Redeemer, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. And, though, like pardoned rebels, who have been lamed in rebellion, our services manifest our sinfulness; yet let us pray to be enabled to aim at adorning and recommending his gospel, and to declare his love, and the freedom of his service, to those around us, and those that shall come after us.—Pray for me and mine. 'The Lord bless you and your's.'

“ November 14, 1794. I trust the Lord will enable you to go forward with increasing earnestness and comfort, and that your united prayers, example, and endeavours, will be prospered to the good of others belonging to you, who are yet far off; and especially that your children will be brought up for God, and live to his glory. In these things we may all hope to bring forth fruit, that shall remain when we are gone to a better world. But, alas! we have so many things to conflict with, both in our own hearts, and around us, that we are often discouraged in our prayers and endeavours for others; and Satan

seems to stand by as an accuser, to represent that we are not proper persons to be made instruments of good to others, who are so sinful in all respects ourselves. Yet this is a mere temptation: the Lord does all his work by instruments who are both unworthy and insufficient in themselves; and they, whose *effectual fervent prayers have availed much*, most certainly had as humble an opinion of themselves and their services, as we can have; yea, more so, in proportion to their superior holiness.—It is in this attention to our families, connexions, and circles, and by our prayers for the church of God, and for our country, that we should endeavour to serve God and our generation in this turbulent and perilous time, when every thing externally dreadful is apprehended by many from outward appearances, and when the spiritual mind will apprehend still greater evils from the atheism, infidelity, impiety, and enormous profligacy, which make such rapid progress on every side. But we should be careful to leave political disputes to worldly people: for engaging in them, on either side, discredits the gospel, and damps the soul as to religion, and brings a curse into every society into which it finds admission.”

“ February 11, 1795. Those professors who seem not to feel such conflicts, and find no such difficulty in living up to their rule, evidently aim low, and do not measure their experiences and attainments by the scriptural standard. The blessing is pronounced by our Lord on those that *hunger and thirst after righteousness*; but hunger and thirst imply the desire, the ardent desire, of what is not yet obtained; and in heaven, when such gracious desires shall be

fully answered, we shall *hunger no more, and thirst no more*. In the mean time, it is well to set our mark high, that we may *press forward, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those that are before*: and, as far as I can judge by your letter, this is the present frame of your spirit. When we feel our need of forgiveness in this and the other respect, and of grace to fill up our station properly to the honour of the gospel, we know what to pray for, and shall pray with our hearts: but, when our convictions are more general, and we are not so particularly acquainted with our wants, enemies, and evil propensities, our prayers will be more languid; and words, good in general, but not feelingly the language of our hearts, will constitute our petitions.—For my part, I am not able, after twenty years endeavouring after it, to rise a whit above a poor sinner, trusting in free mercy, through the atoning blood; and a poor beggar, who might as easily live in health without food, as serve God one day without fresh supplies of wisdom, strength, and grace, sought, in earnest prayer, from the fulness of Christ. If this be neglected, I find all good declines, all evil revives: and am sensible that nothing which has passed would keep me from the vilest crimes, of which my wicked heart is capable, if this could be wholly suspended. Yet, I trust, the Lord does put, and will *put his fear into my heart, that I may not depart from him*: and my view of final perseverance is this, that the Lord has engaged to keep me (if indeed I am a believer,) empty, poor, hungering, praying, and living by faith on the fulness of Christ, till he bring me to glory: and then

all the painful experience I have had of my own weakness and sinfulness will tune my songs of praise to *him that washed me from my sins in his own blood*, through the countless ages of eternity.—Yet God forbid that I should abuse the gospel! I trust I only desire to live that I may serve the Lord, and recommend his gospel: and perfect holiness and obedience are the heaven I hope and long for. But the more I do in the Lord's service, the greater debtor I am to his grace, for the will, power, pardon, and acceptance: and the more I aim to do, the deeper sense I have of my need of the blood and righteousness of Christ, as my only title to the heavenly inheritance.

“ Perhaps this account of my feelings may show you, that your case is not singular; and I feel myself peculiarly interested in your concerns and that of your relatives; to whom, with your minister, pray give my kind remembrance. I feel the same difficulties also about my children, of which you speak: but I endeavour to use means and to commit them to the Lord, and thus to cast my care on him. Yet even here I need forgiveness; and am conscious that neither my example, prayers, or instructions, are what they should be. Thus *boasting is excluded*. I have no claim for myself or them, nor any plea, but God's mercy, and the encouraging promises of his word; which, though general, give hope. And thus I proceed, and leave the matter with him.—Mr. Newton is tolerably well: perhaps the happiest man to be met with. But he grows old, and seems in all respects to break.—I hope I shall not forget to pray for you: I beg the prayers of you all, for I much

need them.—I remain most sincerely, your affectionate friend and well wisher.”

Soon after this period my correspondence with him, first from Cambridge, and afterwards from Hull, began. I only wish that what I insert from his letters may not appear to reflect upon myself, for having no more profited by such excellent advice.

The following extract from his first letter to me at college, may convey useful counsel to young persons, particularly to those in a similar situation.

“ November 2, 1795. You have hitherto been kept greatly out of the way of worldly associates, and assure yourself you have lost nothing by it; for the more they are known, the clearer must be the conviction to every reflecting mind, that they can be of no advantage to a man, in any sense, without a tenfold greater disadvantage. Endeavour, therefore, to cultivate a courteous, kind, and cheerful disposition and behaviour towards all sorts of persons; avoiding moroseness, affectation, and singularity, in things indifferent; but admit no one to your familiarity, who does not seem to you, and to more experienced judges, to have the fear and love of God in his heart. Conciliate by an amiable deportment such as are strangers to the ways of religion, in order to allure them up to your ground; but take not a single step down upon their ground; lest, instead of your drawing them out of the mire, they draw you in. If you act consistently and prudently, and by a moderate attention to your studies, in subserviency to the one thing needful, and to future usefulness, secure a reputable standing in the college; the careless or vicious may affect to de-

spise you, but in their hearts they will respect you. I say a *moderate* application; for I apprehend that very great exertions are not only injurious to the health and spirits; tend to form a man to habits that are unpleasant, or to a kind of oddity; and exceedingly interfere with the growth of grace and every holy affection in the soul; but they counteract their own end; blunt and overstretch the mental powers; and, after surprising progress for a time, incapacitate a person for making any progress at all. Ambition of distinction, more than love of knowledge, is the spur to this too eager course: but neither one nor the other should be your *primum mobile*; but a desire to acquire that competency of useful knowledge, which may fit you for glorifying God, and serving your generation. This will also teach you to take care of your health and spirits; to accustom yourself to corporal as well as mental exertion; (the want of which is severely felt by most of our ministers who are academical men;) to cultivate that kind of behaviour, which may render you as acceptable as truth and conscientiousness will let a man be in this world—the want of which is one of my principal disadvantages; and so to travel on at a sober rate, without over-pushing the horse at the beginning of the journey.—Excessive eagerness in any particular study has also this disadvantage, that it is apt to render a man rather *learned* than *wise*, or even *knowing*; as over-eating renders a man full, but does not nourish him. They who read too much do not digest: they learn what others say, but they do not make it their own by reflection, or *distinguish between the precious and the vile*. But moderate study; with

frequent pauses for reflection, useful conversation, and exercise, adds more to real knowledge, and leaves time to apply it to practical uses. You certainly should not waste time; but stinting yourself to so much of this or the other every day, may cramp you; render your mind uncomfortable; and unfit you for the exercises of religion—without which nothing else will really prosper.—I would advise you frequently to write your own thoughts on subjects; and try to get the habit of doing it in Latin: it may be of use to you some time, beyond what you now perceive.—But whatever you read or write, compare all with the Bible: study divinity as a Christian, and as one intended to be a minister; and other things only in subordination to it: for this is your *general*, and your *particular* calling too.—I pray the Lord to be your Guard, Guide, Father, and Comforter!”

Having consulted him on the subject of joining some small companies of young men, who met in college for religious exercises, on the Sunday evenings, I received the following answer:

“November 13, 1795. There are two ways in which any practice may be deemed irregular; and in each of them concealment may perhaps be expedient. A practice (good in itself, I mean,) may be irregular, as contrary to the *express rules* of the society to which a man has voluntarily joined himself: or it may be irregular, as contrary to the customs, notions, or inclinations of such persons as have influence in that society; and thus it may seem to oppose their authority, by opposing their *private will*. Thus clergymen often, in some particulars, act contrary to the wishes of their diocesan, and seem to oppose his



authority; when they do not act contrary to any of those laws, by which his authority is exercised and limited.—If authority be absolute, we ought not to enter willingly into any society, without determining to conform in all things to the will of the ruler: if limited, we should purpose to conform to the extent of those limitations. I suppose the practice of your friends is not contrary to the express rules of the college, or of the university; and, as to the contrariety to the sentiments or inclinations of such persons as evidently do not favour vital godliness, I do not think that any real objection: though the express prohibition of one in authority, even if it were not strictly legal, would have great weight in my mind, where the practice was not an essential duty. As far as these two things, namely, an *express rule* and an *express prohibition*, do not interfere, I think you are quite at liberty to use every means, that appears to you, and your pious friends and seniors, conducive to your mutual edification: and even an express rule, if grown obsolete, and disused by general consent, does not appear, in all cases, an exception, unless those in authority declare their purpose of exacting obedience to it.

“ If on such grounds as these you and your friends see the way clear, and have no consciousness of acting contrary to actual or implicit engagements, *concealment* seems to be no more than a matter deemed at present expedient; as we do not think it right to tell every one when we retire for prayer, or when we give to the poor. Yet it appears to me advisable not to be too anxious about concealment; lest that anxiety and precaution should appear, which might

excite more suspicion, or give more ground for censure, than the thing itself. There is a modest, prudent secrecy; and there is a timid jealous secrecy, which leads into temptation, and is quite needless in a good cause, and with a good conscience.

“ I do not quite understand whether your friends actually keep out of the reach of the Conventicle Act, or not. If no more than *five* meet in one place, I can see no manner of objection on the score of ecclesiastical irregularity. If they do meet in greater numbers, the matter demands more consideration. I look on that act as a direct opposition of human authority to the word of God; and I cannot deem myself bound, *in foro conscientiæ*, to obey it: but at the same time expediency may often suggest obedience. It better becomes ministers and others of some standing to deviate from the injunctions of a bad law, and by their example to protest against it, and to venture the consequences; while their conduct in all other things has long shown them willing to obey in all things lawful; than young men to set out with such disregard to any rules, as may lead others to think they mean to set up their own will as their rule.— Places and connexions also make a difference. . . .

“ A very strong reason indeed would be necessary to justify your declining the proposal of your friends, as it would tend to interrupt that cordiality, on which much of your comfort, and security against other connexions, depends. At the same time I feel strongly the force of your other objection; and would have you plead for being, for a time, a mere hearer. You may urge that you have heard me say, that the seniors in all such societies should chiefly take the

lead; as it has an unhappy effect on many young minds to conduct religious exercises too soon, or too often, in the presence of their superiors. . . . Whatever may be my engagements, I can have no more pleasant, perhaps no more useful employment, than what relates to your spiritual progress.”

The following account of the methods adopted by one, who had studied divine truth with so much success, will doubtless be interesting to the reader.

“ December 10, 1795. I know not what further directions to give you respecting the manner of inquiring after truth, and seeking to have it more deeply impressed on the heart, and, as it were, wrought into the judgment and affections, than are already in print. I find it exceedingly difficult to keep my attention fixed, or to get my heart suitably affected, in reading and meditating upon truths, which have become obvious and familiar by daily study: but there are times when I find, that, while I try to muse on the subject, *a fire*, as it were, *kindles*, and contemplation terminates in adoring gratitude and admiring love.—In general, I think, I have found it advantageous sometimes to read the scriptures with such exactness, as to weigh every expression, and its connexions, as if I were about to preach on every verse; and then to apply the result to my own case, character, experience, and conduct, as if it had been directly addressed to me—not as a new promise or revelation, but as a message containing warning, caution, reproof, exhortation, encouragement, or direction, according to my previous or present state of mind, and my peculiar circumstances. In short, to make the passages into a kind

of sermons, as if about to preach to others, and then to turn the whole application on myself, as far as suited to my case; as if another, who fully knew me, had been addressing me.—At other times I have read a passage more generally, and then selected two or three of the most important observations from it, and endeavoured to employ my mind in meditation on them, and to consider how they bore on the state of my heart, or on my past life, or on those things which I heard or observed in the world or the church; and to compare them with the variety of sentiment, experiences, conduct, or prominent characters, with which we become gradually more and more acquainted. Thus I have endeavoured to read the scriptures, and to use them as a touchstone to distinguish *the precious from the vile*, both at home and abroad.—At other times, having perhaps heard or read the opinions of different men on any disputed subject, I have, in my daily reading of the scriptures, constantly kept those opinions in view, that I might at length form my judgment on which side truth lay. In doing this, I have always aimed to keep my mind from the two extremes, on the one hand, of giving up my own opinion, from a kind of false humility, and deference for men, without being previously convinced that I had been mistaken; and, on the other hand, of assuming my opinion to be truth, so as to exclude light, especially if it came from an enemy, or a person not entitled to much deference. So that I have always aimed to be open to conviction; to bring every man's probable opinion to the touchstone, and to give it a fair trial, if not tried before; but not to receive it, without plainly perceiving its

agreement with the scripture; and at the same time to aim, that my heart might be suitably affected with the conclusions of my understanding—in which I have principally failed. But, a spirit of continual prayer, mixed with reading, has been my principal help in all these things; without which either self-wisdom or indolent dependence on human teaching will surely prevail.”

“ February 13, 1796. I think you are very right in cultivating general knowledge. . . . I trust, however, you will not neglect the peculiar studies of the place, so as not to appear with credit on proper occasions. The object in all your studies should be, neither celebrity, advantage, nor knowledge, for its own sake; but furniture to enable you to serve God and your generation; and as much credit as may give weight to your endeavours of that kind. Any friend that has cultivated general knowledge successfully, will give you hints on the best method of doing it; and *gleaning* seems to me an important matter. Learn from every body: be selfish in this respect: get all you can, not only from superior men, but from the most inferior. But be sure you compare all your real or supposed knowledge with the word of God. If real, it will elucidate, and be elucidated by it: if not, it will be detected and exposed by the touch-stone.—At some time or other, I would advise you to study well the evidences of revelation; not merely in a general way, but so as to be master of the subject. Perhaps it may be soon enough at present: but it is a matter of great importance in this age especially.—Above all, cultivate personal religion. Let nothing be an excuse to your mind for being slight in

that matter. Even useful labours for the good of others may be separated from diligence in the concerns of our own souls: but it is this which must bring a blessing on all else, and cause it to proceed with life and vigour.”

The next letter treats of an important point of theology, on which much indistinctness of conception appears frequently to prevail.

“ May 7, 1796. I have not above a sheet to write for the sermons, or rather the prayers; and then I mean to rest a while; that is from *fagging* as I have lately done.<sup>1</sup> My parishioners, or clerk, (who is a *plasterer*,) have shut up my church in Bread Street, to *beautify*: so that my little congregation, which rather increased of late, will now be dispersed, and I shall have all to begin over again. *All these things are against me!* But all, I trust, will be for me. . . . I do not think you need to have crossed out what you wrote about Edwards”—President Edwards on the love of God; that it is not merely gratitude, but includes a delight in the holy excellency of the divine character and perfections. “ I firmly believe that — and — never read him, with sufficient attention and impartiality, fully to understand that part of his plan. He may express himself, at some times, too absolutely; but, if we leave out the glorious perfections of the true God, which are his *loveliness*, or that especially for which he should be loved, how shall we distinguish him from idols? I do not mean from images, but from imaginary deities, the creatures of men’s fancy, who think God *such an one as*

<sup>1</sup> The answer to Paine was completed in the same month with the volume of Sermons.

*themselves*, and so worship and love their own invention and similitude, instead of that glorious Being, who makes himself known to us by immediate revelation. Even in exercising *gratitude* to God, I must take in the consideration of his infinite greatness, holiness, and excellency, to form a proper estimate of the favours bestowed on so mean and vile a sinner; or my gratitude will be no more than self-love reflected; at least it will not be a pious and holy affection. The whole plan of the gospel is intended to exhibit the loveliness of Jehovah, in all his harmonious excellencies: and shall we not include that loveliness in loving him? I may be *thankful* to a man whose character I deem odious; I may *love* the man who never showed me any kindness. But love of excellency, desire of union and conformity, gratitude, and zeal, all unite in the love of God, which both law and gospel require of us.—To love God ‘for his own sake,’ does not mean so loving him, as to have no regard to our own happiness at all; but so as to seek our happiness in admiring, serving, and glorifying him; in bearing his image, and enjoying his favour. If Edwards speaks, at some times, rather more strongly than this seems to imply, I am persuaded, from the general tenour of his writings, that he does not mean any thing inconsistent with it.—I do not think that —— and —— meant to exclude love of the divine excellency, as well as gratitude for mercies bestowed upon us; but merely to oppose an abstract notion, which they erroneously suppose the American divines to have advanced. At the same time, I think they and many others have imbibed, and do propagate, an unhappy prejudice

against these writers; and, for fear of their system, they often speak inconsistently with themselves, and seem to be without fixed sentiments in this particular; and countenance certain sentiments, which, did they see their tendency, they would abhor. As to the text, *We love him because he first loved us*, it can only mean, that we should never have loved God, had he not first loved us; and, if we do now love him with genuine affection, it is full proof that we are the objects of his love; this being *the seal* of his Spirit in our hearts.

“But I have written more than I can fairly afford. I would have you endeavour to avoid all prejudices, as much as possible; and fairly, in humility and with prayer, to give different authors a careful examination: not too many at a time, or as if it were necessary to make up your mind on every subject; but deliberately, and with much exercise of your own thoughts on the various views set before you.”

I would here just add, that, even if any persons should be of opinion that the text quoted (1 John iv. 19) speaks more directly of the love of gratitude, it would only prove, what I apprehend no one wishes to deny, that favours received form *one* ground of that complex affection which is styled the love of God; not that this is the *only* ground, or that no stress is to be laid on the love of moral esteem for the divine character.—One great reason for insisting on the principles of this letter is, that even a wicked man, taking for granted, on whatever grounds, (as it is to be feared many have done,) that he enjoys the favour of God, and is an heir of all the blessings of which he reads in the scriptures, may, on that erroneous assumption, feel a flow of gratitude, which he may mis-



take for the love of God, and thus be confirmed in his delusion, while his heart is really at enmity with God ; and that this error is best guarded against, by urging the necessity of cordial reconciliation to the divine holiness, and delight in the perfections of the divine character.

May 21st, he writes : “ I am decidedly of opinion, that the slight and unscriptural kind of gospel current in most places, especially about London, threatens the cause of genuine Christianity more than the attacks of open enemies. Nothing will do more mischief, though silently and without observation, than mistaking a small part of the divine testimony for the whole of it. This would be readily understood, if prescriptions sent to a druggist to be made up should be compounded in the same partial manner, with only one half or quarter of the ingredients. In this case lives would be lost, and the medical art disgraced : in the parallel one souls will be ruined, and the gospel dishonoured.—But alas ! numbers go further, and put poison in the mixture, instead of the salutary ingredients prescribed by the great Physician.”

The following letter to a lady on a popular volume of hymns arose out of his visits to Margate. It points out some important distinctions, often not duly adverted to.

“ Mr. Hart, in his hymns, often represents faith as consisting in a belief that Christ died *for me*, in particular ; which, being no proposition of scripture, can only be *directly* known by a new revelation. This opens a door to delusion. Many are confident, whose lives prove their confidence to be presumption : and

many are cast down for want of this confidence, concluding themselves *unbelievers* because they have it not, whose faith is notwithstanding proved to be living and saving, by its proper fruits. Faith is the belief of God's testimony, especially concerning his Son, and eternal life for sinners, in him : it embraces this salvation, and gives up other confidences, and other objects, for the sake of it : and, when its effects on the judgment, desires, affections, &c. prove it to be genuine, the spirit of adoption enables a man to *conclude according to scripture*, that Christ died for him in particular. But this is rather the maturity of faith and hope than *essential* to the nature of faith.—Again, a person's *doubting of his own state* is generally condemned by Mr. H., as unbelief ; whereas it is often a genuine exercise of faith in God's word, under existing circumstances. We believe, on God's testimony, that such and such characters have only a dead faith ; and we find reason to doubt, whether we are not such characters. This puts us on self-examination, prayer, &c. : and thus our doubts, which were very salutary, are removed.—The apostle *stood in doubt* of the Galatians : and surely it behoved them to doubt of themselves.—Indeed every caution against being deceived, in the whole scripture, confutes this too popular sentiment ; which is only suited to bolster up the presumptuous, and crush the feeble and tempted.—To doubt the truth of God's word, or the power and willingness of Christ to save all that truly come to him, is direct unbelief : but to doubt whether I come aright, and am a true believer, when many things in my experience and conduct seem inconsistent with the life of

faith and grace, is the grand preservative against delusion, and incitement to watchfulness, self-examination, and circumspection. But Mr. H. does not attend to such distinctions.—The same is frequently the case in respect to *fear*. Many passages indiscriminately condemn every kind of fear; though the scripture says, *Blessed is he that feareth always; Be not high minded, but fear*. Yet in other places he speaks a different language.

“ Upon the whole, Mr. H. was a man of a warm heart, and of a lively imagination; and sometimes he displayed a poetical genius: but, for want of more accuracy of judgment, he has left passages, in some of his hymns capable of a dangerous construction.”

Observations, similar to those of this letter, my father used pointedly to apply to an abuse, current in some quarters, of that fine passage in the conclusion of the book of Habakkuk, in which the prophet declares his confidence and joy in God, under the failure of all external sources of consolation. The abuse consists in what is called *spiritualizing* the language of the inspired writer, and thus employing it to cherish a confidence of God's favour, when faith, and hope, and love, and every other grace may have been long out of exercise, and perhaps no sufficient evidence exists that we ever were true Christians at all.

In a letter dated December 29, 1796, my father regrets his want of skill in Hebrew, but adds, “ It is too late for me to go to school in this sense.” Yet much after this time he did attain a degree of critical proficiency in the language; so that his remarks were acknowledged to be among the most valuable that were received on the late Hebrew version of the New

Testament, while it was in progress. He subjoins some observations on learning. “Of all kinds of learning, none seems more important, than an accurate knowledge of the two languages, which the Lord has honoured by giving in them his sacred oracles. As to mathematics, they doubtless have their use; but a moderate proficiency in them is enough for your purpose. . . . I must own, I feel in my best moments, that I had rather be the author of the Discourse on Repentance, than of Sir Isaac Newton’s Principia: for the salvation of one soul gives joy in heaven, but we read not that angels notice philosophical discoveries. Yet learning of every kind, if attended with humility, and subordinated to the one thing needful, may be very usefully employed in the service of the truth: and some of Christ’s servants should be learned men; for others can seldom have access to the learned, or to those who would be thought such; and there are many important services, which learned men alone can perform.”

The following remarks on habits, and on the regulation of employments, appear to proceed on the soundest principles, and may be both instructive and encouraging to the conscientious mind.

“March 15, 1797. Having been worked too hard at some times, I am at others very much disposed to indulge a kind of sloth, and only to amuse myself with reading. This is, I know, in some measure necessary; and yet it is so apt to grow upon me, till it become a kind of habit, and require much exertion to break through, when I am better able, that I am very much afraid of admitting it on any occasion. It is also inimical to my comfort; for I always feel

most disposed to dejection, and to view every thing in the most discouraging light, when I am least active: so that on all accounts, when I am able, I must be employed about something, which is, at least, *an attempt* to exercise my ministry, and employ my talents to the glory of God and the good of others; whether what I do answer any purpose or not. The state of public affairs, and the great stagnation that has taken place in respect to the demand for books, has made me rather less earnest in preparing any thing for publication: but I believe I must go on writing, whether I publish or not; or I shall be like those who give over business, and then grow low-spirited, or get into mischief, for want of regular employment. Few men know how to use leisure either comfortably or profitably; and a regular plan and succession of employments, provided it be so formed as to imply *seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness*, according to the duty of our station, seems to be very important. To them who have their time at their own disposal, some care and consideration, with wisdom and grace, are requisite to form a plan: but, when formed, it should in ordinary cases be adhered to, so as to grow into a good *habit*: for, though what we do habitually sometimes seems mechanical, and not clearly evidential of the right principle; yet the very circumstance of its being rendered habitual by self-denying exertion, so that we cannot deviate from it without uneasiness, and consciousness of criminality, unless we have a good reason for doing so, is a presumption that it sprang from a right principle originally. For my part, I often feel as if the constant succession of duties in the family, asylum, hospital,

chapel, study, and in visiting the sick, were as mechanical as if I were making tables and chairs: yet it is so contrary to the plan upon which I once was, that I think the forming of the habit was the effect of a new disposition and purpose of heart: and I now feel guilty and uneasy, if, without urgent cause, I deviate from it; which sometimes keeps me going, when I feel considerable reluctance: and yet those times often eventually prove most satisfactory.—We should, however, be careful not to be too much attached to our own plans: we should not offer to prescribe them to others, whom they may not suit: or to censure those who have other plans, provided they be not unscriptural: and, when an occasion of serving others occurs, which deranges our plan, we should readily make it give way; as a man would sit up all night to help to extinguish the flames, if his neighbour's house were on fire. When we appear reluctant to this, it arises from a too great fondness for our own humour. In this I have often detected myself: I could not bear my plan to be deranged, though it was plain the honour of God, and the benefit of souls, required it.”

In a letter of the same month I find a slight notice of his last visit to his old and revered friend the Rev. Henry Venn, who died soon after at Clapham. Of this visit he ever retained a delightful remembrance. He found Mr. V. at first in rather a torpid and vacant state: but at length, on the mention of the prospect before him, and the many spiritual children who had preceded him, and would welcome him to glory, all his ancient fire rekindled, and he talked for some time in the most animated and heavenly strain.

Indeed it was remarked that this aged saint, when he seemed nearly expiring, was repeatedly revived again by the thoughts of the happiness which awaited him, and continued somewhat longer on earth through the inspiring prospect of the glory prepared for him in heaven.

His eldest sister, Mrs. Webster, had, in 1794, lost one of her two daughters, and was now threatened with the loss of the other. This drew from my father the following expressions of pious and affectionate sympathy.

“ April 20, 1797. It is a duty to use such means as we can to preserve life, and restore health: yet we all know that many other things must be consulted. Physicians often recommend such means, as their patients are unable to try: and, when this is the case, there is no ground of anxiety or regret; for the ability, the means, and the blessing, are all in the hand of God.—It is often a comfort to me, both in respect of myself and those dear to me, that the Saviour who was *wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, has the keys of death and of the eternal world.* If we can but say, *Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick,* we may confidently commit the event to him. It may be very different for a time (as in the case of Lazarus,) from what we should choose; but in the final issue it will demonstrate his wisdom, as well as his faithfulness and love. The number of our trials, and pains, and days; the circumstances of our life and death; are all with him. He can be touched with the feeling of our sorrows, and consults *our* feelings as far as wisdom will permit. But *faithful are the wounds of a friend:* and he

prefers our durable and eternal good, even to our present comfort; though he *will not leave his disciples comfortless, or orphans, or bereaved persons. But what he doeth we know not now; hereafter we shall know.* We do not even know the effect of trials on our own souls: we cannot say what we should have been without them: we cannot estimate or measure our own progress or growth. The Lord's plan is very complex: but the truth is sure, *All things work together for good to them that love God, whom he hath called according to his purpose. . . .* I have no doubt of the event to you, that it will be mercy:

The cloud you so much dread  
Is big with mercy, and will break  
In blessings on your head.

But nature must feel, and I do most heartily pray God to spare your feelings, and to preserve your child, to be both a comfort to you, and a blessing to others. But I am not confident that he will see good to answer these prayers, because they are, perhaps, the language of ignorance or mistake. All I see, hear, or feel, convinces me, that nothing is worth living for, but to prepare for death and heaven, and to do some good in the world. If therefore the Lord has given her grace to choose the good part, to flee for refuge to Christ, and to yield herself to him in penitent faith and love, if He has any work for her to do in the world, she will certainly live to do it; and, if not, departing hence to be with Christ will be a loss to others, but her richest gain."

The young woman died about three months afterwards, as her sister had done before her, a most happy death.



At this period Mr. Wilberforce's "Practical View" made its appearance; and I trust I may, without offence in any quarter, allow the public to observe the impression which that work made upon my father's mind.

"April 26, 1797. It is a most noble and manly stand for the gospel; full of good sense, and most useful observations on subjects quite out of our line; and in all respects fitted for usefulness; and, coming from such a man, it will probably be read by many thousands, who can by no means be brought to attend either to our preaching or writings. Taken in all its probable effects, I do sincerely think such a bold stand for vital Christianity has not been made in my memory. He has come out beyond all my expectations. He testifies of the noble, and amiable, and honourable, that their works are evil; and he proves his testimony beyond all denial. He gives exactly the practical view of the tendency of evangelical principles, for which I contend; only he seems afraid of Calvinism, and is not very systematical: perhaps it is so much the better.—It seems, likewise, a book suited to reprove and correct some timid friends, who are at least half afraid of the gospel, being far more *prudent* than the apostles were; or we should never have been able to *spell* out Christian truths from their writings. But it is especially calculated to show those their mistake, who preach evangelical doctrines, without a due exhibition of their practical effects. I pray God to do much good by it! and I cannot but hope that I shall get much good from it, both as a preacher and a Christian."

Indeed, of all the high and deserved compliments

which have been paid to this work, scarcely any, it has appeared to me, have more strongly spoken its worth, than the manner in which my father always regarded it. In general, I was tempted to think that he formed rather too low an estimate of the books which came before him, especially those connected with his own profession ; which arose, no doubt, from the depth of thought which he had himself bestowed upon the subjects of them. But the sentiments of this work appeared to him so just, and many parts of it as he expresses it, “ so much out of our ” accustomed “ line,” that he recurred to it again and again, and never seemed weary of the perusal.

From a letter full of wise, animating, and exciting counsel, but too personal to be inserted more at large, I give the following extracts.

“ November 28, 1797. Upon the whole, if I have many difficulties and discouragements in one way, they are counterbalanced in another ; and I have every reason to think, that the Lord will make my poor labours from the press considerably, and, I hope, durably useful. My answer to Paine has been reprinted, and, I am told, is approved in America. The Force of Truth has also been reprinted there. . . . I mention this to show you, that the Lord will make use of honest, though mean endeavours to promote his cause ; and that he mixes encouragements with humiliating dispensations, in his dealings with those who trust in him. . . . The Lord puts his *treasure into earthen vessels* ; such as men despise, and such as think meanly of themselves. He makes little use of those attainments and accomplishments which men so much admire, and which many think absolutely

essential to the ministry. . . . Consider well the worth of immortal souls; the millions, all over the world, who are *perishing for lack of knowledge*; the awful delusions which prevail, even in this land; the few, comparatively, of even *honest* and *faithful* preachers; how the Lord is taking many of them from us; what a determined combination is every where made against Christianity; and what an honour it will at last be found, to have been decidedly on the Lord's part—an instrument of defeating the gates of hell—of sowing seed for that harvest which he will shortly gather—as well as of rescuing, though it be but a few, souls from eternal destruction, to be your *crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming*. With all my discouragements and sinful despondency, in my better moments I can think of no work worth doing, compared with this. Had I a thousand lives, I would willingly spend them in it: and had I as many sons, I should gladly devote them to it.—I have little doubt that you will see your way clear before the time comes: and though a country situation may probably be most eligible, yet, I trust you will say, *Here am I, Lord, send me where thou wilt*. (Isaiah vi. 8.). . . .

“ Praying *frequently* helps to pray *fervently*. . . .

“ Watch against *heartlessness* as against the grossest crime; for it is very dishonourable to the mercy and grace of the gospel, and to His name, who commands his servants to *rejoice in hope*; and a very great hindrance to active endeavours to glorify him. . . . Strive against reserve. . . . Beware lest pride, and fastidiousness, and the fear of not acquitting yourself creditably, influence you to be silent, where

you should speak : for pride may work this way, as well as in forwardness and self-sufficiency. Nature always needs counteracting and correcting : and whatever endowment is, or may be necessary to the service intended for us, we should *long before* be asking it of the Lord in daily prayer, and using means to obtain it, and to overcome impediments : and, though we may for a long time seem unsuccessful, we shall find, at length, that it has not been in vain.

“ I am sorry to hear of Mr. ——’s death, and of —— : but Mr. Milner’s death especially affects me, and bids me redouble my diligence, while the day lasts.”

With Mr. Milner of Hull, my father had no personal acquaintance. That he had the highest esteem for his character, I need not say. His death took place the same month in which this letter was written, in the fifty-fourth year of his age.

A passage in the latter part of this letter reminds me of a beautiful sentence of Plato, Archbishop of Moscow, who enumerates among the “ external signs,” by which our “ internal devotion ” should be indicated, “ joy of countenance, produced by a glad heart, sensible of the infinite goodness of God.”

A letter, dated February 14, 1798, gives an account of a long conversation with the late Dean of Carlisle, (Dr. Milner,) in which “ a variety of questions, both concerning doctrines, experience, and the state of religion in town,” were discussed. My father says, “ He allowed nearly all my sentiments as true and important ; but I could hardly persuade him that any men, who were not totally and evidently bad characters, would hold such notions, and

make such abuses of the gospel, as I too well know many do.”—I insert this sentence, because I am aware, that persons at a distance from the scene in which my father lived, and strangers to many things which came under his observation, have been ready to judge him unduly apprehensive of antinomian abuses of the gospel.

The remainder of the letter shows the “godly jealousy” with which he looked upon any degree of success, however slight, obtained in the university: and is one among a thousand proofs, how far he was from viewing things with the eyes of “a man of this world.” “I rejoice with trembling; and would suggest a cautious, jealous watchfulness. I know how prone the heart is to be puffed up with any kind of distinction, or supposed advance, or comparative knowledge. I feel it to this hour, after all my mortifications; and I cannot do without them. I am aware how bewitching those studies must appear to a youthful mind in your situation—among so many who judge by unscriptural rules—which procure applause, distinction, or the prospect of secular advantage; and what a strong temptation there is, to devote more time to them, than to others of far more importance, which are of small repute in the world, but derive an unspeakable value from their enabling the possessor, *though poor, to make many rich, and having nothing, yet to possess all things.* I own I have a higher aim for you, than any eminence in an university, or any acquirements of human learning could bestow: and I hope you have, and will have the same for yourself.

I may be permitted to say, that I derive much

pleasure, in transcribing such extracts, from the hope, that they may be the means of communicating a portion of the writer's spirit to young men preparing for the sacred office; and especially to such as may be more in *danger* of academical distinction, than the person was, to whom they were originally addressed.

A proposal made to place a young woman, distantly connected with the family, under his care, because of the imprudent marriage of her sister, gave occasion to his making some remarks on education, and on the conduct of parents.

“ July 14, 1798. In respect of your niece who has married so imprudently, I should say, now it is irreparable, her mother should endeavour to make the best of it. Disapprobation, to be sure, should be expressed, and strongly; but that kind of resentment, which influences parents to refuse seeing or forgiving their disobedient children, often tends to complete their ruin. It is not at all improbable that her self-will may very severely correct her; and that, when smarting under the rod she has made for herself, she may remember the instructions formerly given and despised, and become more accessible to good counsel; and so at last become an imitator of the prodigal son. The first symptoms of such a relenting should be waited for in the spirit of prayer, and met with prompt kindness. In the mean time reproaches should be spared, and every reproof given with mildness and compassion, as well as with arguments suited to convince. Every thing, either in her or her husband, tending to a proper and prudent conduct, even in temporal concerns, should meet with a proportionate encouragement; and every thing

proper should be done to prevent the wreck of their circumstances : while even solicitation should be used to persuade them to attend on the means of grace. In some way of this kind there may be a hope that the rash step may be overruled by divine mercy for good. It appears to me, that in such cases (as that of the parent,) it behoves us to examine ourselves, in order to discover whether the Lord is not *contending with us* for some neglect of our proper duty, while others are left to violate their duty to us : for, without this be discovered and confessed before the Lord in humble repentance, we cannot reasonably expect to enjoy comfort under affliction, to have it sanctified, or to find a happy event to it. The principles and plan of modern education are such, and I have so long made my observations on the effect of them, that I cannot but suspect the mother has, in some degree, been guilty of Eli's fault ; which brings sore calamities on families, and especially on the families of religious people. *Self-will* is natural to us ; and, if indulged, it gathers strength with our years, and at length will brook no control. Children, like young colts, must be broken in ; and the sooner the better. The child, that has *early* been constrained to give up its will to that of a parent, will, without severity, be trained to a *habit of submission*, which will not easily be broken through when he is grown up ; even though he want religion effectually to produce submission to God. But the *reverse* is modern education, and especially among religious people."

"I own," he says, "I am grievously afraid of young people who have been indulged when children." And subsequently, "At boarding schools they are, in ge-

neral, much more of fine ladies than I should wish any body about me to be. On this account I have resolutely refused many friendly, and apparently advantageous offers from the teachers of schools, respecting my daughter, who has never left home."

The unmarried sister, being soon after left an orphan, was received into his family, and died there about half a year afterwards; being, I trust, to be added to the number of those, who received the most important benefit under his roof.

His nephew having, at this period, proposed to enter into the church, he points out what he conceives to be the best plan to be adopted, and says, "If you can make up your mind to it, I consider such a delayed course as no objection; for I think the nearer thirty the better, before a man be engaged in such a work as that of the ministry." A year afterwards, proposing to receive him under his own tuition, he writes:

"December 19, 1799: I must soon decease and be gone. I have borne a faithful, but rude and feeble testimony: my desire is to be instrumental in bringing forward some young men, who may carry on the same work to better advantage when I am removed: for a tendency to antinomianism is the bane of evangelical preaching in this day; both by *lowering* Christianity among those within, *deceiving* professors, and *disgracing* the common cause. . . . I have a most deep and heartfelt conviction of the truth and importance of those *peculiarities*, which have hitherto made me unpopular; and I wish to communicate and perpetuate them, by young persons who may have advantages that I have not."

The last letter which I shall produce, belonging to



this period, will be esteemed one of no common interest. It will itself explain the circumstances under which it was written.

“Chapel Street, November 22, 1801. Dear John, I understand that you have been informed by Mr. Pratt's letters to Mr. Dikes, that I am recovering from my late sickness; and this may keep you and dear Frances from anxiety on my account: yet I thought a few lines from me would be welcome on the occasion, and have therefore allotted a part of this evening (Sunday) to the purpose.

“During almost sixteen years' continuance in London, though often greatly indisposed, I had never once before been prevented officiating on the Sunday: but I have now done nothing since Wednesday sennight in the evening. I have not been able even to pray in the family till last night, and then with great difficulty. In the former part of life, I had many more violent and long continued fevers: but I have not been so ill, since I had a nervous fever in Shropshire, in 1783; and, as far as I can recollect, I never had so violent an attack of the asthma before. For many hours of two successive nights, it was all but absolute suffocation; and the sense and dread of that were continually present to my mind. Yet, bless the Lord, I was not left either to murmur or despond. I had very serious apprehensions of immediate death; though I said nothing to those around me: and all my cares, plans, hopes, (as to this world,) and every thing, except my wife and children, seemed quite out of sight. I had not any *sensible* comfort; yet I thought of dying, without emotion: though the idea of dying by suffocation seemed formidable. I felt the

grand concern to be safe; and was willing to leave all below, to have done with suffering, sin, and temptation. I did not feel much of what the apostle mentions, of *DESIRING to be with Christ*; and I was convinced, for that very reason, that my Christianity was of a small growth: yet I trusted that it was genuine. I tried to commit all I loved, and all I had laboured to effect, into the Lord's hands: and I thought of recovering, as a sailor, just about to enter harbour, would of being ordered out to sea again. Yet I was willing, if the Lord saw good.—This was about the state of my mind. I could confusedly recollect very many things to be humbled for, and ashamed of; but nothing that impeached the sincerity of my professed faith in Christ, and love to him: and, though conscious of very many faults and imperfections in my ministry, I was also conscious, that I had honestly sought to glorify God, and save souls, in preference to all worldly interests. My hope was that of a sinner, throughout saved by grace: yet I was satisfied, that the aim of my heart, and the tenour of my conduct, since I professed the gospel, evidenced that I had built on the sole foundation by a *living* faith.—When I die, it is not to be expected, that I should be able to declare my views and experiences: and therefore I commit these things to paper, as what passed in my mind, when I had serious apprehensions of dying.

“ It pleased God, however, at length to bless the means, and repeated emetics, blisters, &c. abated the paroxysm: yet the lungs were left in such a state, and I had so strong a fever, that, for almost ten days, I tasted neither animal food, nor fermented liquor,

except a spoonful of wine two or three times, by way of trial, which always disagreed with me. So that, altogether, I have been reduced very low: but, thank God, the fever yielded to medicine; and I have now nothing remaining of my disorder, but the langour, and a sort of irritable state of the lungs, which chiefly troubles me by preventing me from sleeping. In other respects I am amazingly recovered, and relish my food better than I have done for months past. I am, however, advancing in years; and this attack will probably have some effect upon my plans, so far as to make me backward to undertake all that labour, which I had some thoughts of. But wherever, or how long, or in whatever way, I may be employed, I never felt so deeply convinced in my life, that *being employed*, as a minister, is the only thing worth living for. The vanity of all worldly possessions, distinctions, connexions, and enjoyments, never so forcibly impressed my mind, as on this occasion. The folly of shrinking from that hardship or suffering, which the frown or scorn of men can inflict on us, for faithfulness, appeared extreme; when I felt how easily God could inflict far sharper sufferings, if he saw good. The reality and importance of eternal things shone on the scenes around me; so that the crowds of noble and affluent sinners, following the steps of the rich man in the gospel, appeared the most miserable of wretches. Transient pain taught me emphatically the value of deliverance from *eternal* misery; and endeared the love of the deliverer, who voluntarily endured such pain and agony for us vile sinners. The evil of sin, the happiness of the poorest true Christian, and the little consequence of the smooth-

ness or ruggedness of the path, provided we come to heaven at last : these things, and others connected with them, have not, for many years at least, so impressed my mind.—The Friday evening before I was taken ill, I preached on the text, *Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* But I did not properly dwell on the Lord's method of making us *partakers of his holiness* : so he has since preached to me on the subject. And, as I now think little of the distress and pain attending the remedies used for my body, (the pain is all past,) because I hope I shall have the subsequent benefit of better health ; how little should I think of the sharpest sufferings I can here go through, if the health of my soul be forwarded, and, at length, perfected, by means of them : or rather how ought I to bless and thank God for them all.—Pray for me, that I may not lose these impressions ; but, if spared, may live, and preach, and pray, and write, in a manner, somewhat less unsuitable to the vastly important services I am engaged in : for *who can be sufficient for these things ?*—I rejoiced, and blessed God, when I recollected that he had put you into this high office of the ministry. Oh may he preserve you from the snares, and smiles, and frowns of the world ; from the fascinations and delusions, from the lukewarmness, and evangelical formality, and attachment to secular interests, which are sanctioned too much in the church ! May you be a wiser, holier, more faithful, and more useful minister, than ever I have been !—Oh keep the concluding scene in view every step of the way ; and judge of every thing by it. The evils I have protested against in health appeared to me far, far more

pernicious, as I lay gasping for breath, than before : and I seem to rejoice in the hope of entering further protests against them.—But I must stop my pen, or I shall hurt myself. You will excuse the overflowings of my heart at this time : it never was more full of love for you . . . . My love and blessing to *my daughter*. God bless and prosper you, in the best sense!—Your truly affectionate father, THOMAS SCOTT.”

An addition to the letter by another hand, made the next morning, observes, “ He was yesterday (the first time he went down stairs,) enabled to go to chapel, and that without any injury. He is now at work, as usual, in the study ! ”

On this very striking and affecting letter I shall venture to offer a few remarks.

1. It can hardly be necessary to call the reader's attention to the deep and vivid impressions, made on the writer's mind, of “ the reality and importance of eternal things ; ” of “ the vanity of all worldly possessions, distinctions, connexions, and enjoyments ; ” of “ the happiness of the poorest true Christian ; ” of the extreme misery of “ the crowds of noble and affluent sinners, following the steps of the rich man in the gospel ; ” of the “ little consequence of the smoothness or ruggedness of the path, provided we come to heaven at last ; ” of the welcome with which we should receive “ the sharpest sufferings, we can go through here, if the health of our souls may be forwarded, and, at length, perfected by means of them.”

2. The views which he takes of the work of the ministry, and of “ the folly of shrinking from that hardship or suffering, which the frown or scorn of

men can inflict on us for faithfulness ;” and the prayer, “ Oh may he preserve you (as a minister, especially,) from the snares, and smiles, and frowns of the world, from the fascinations and delusions, from the lukewarmness, and evangelical formality, and attachment to secular interests, which are sanctioned too much in the church !” cannot fail to strike every mind. The light, also, in which, apparently on a dying bed, he now saw the *specialities*, if I may so call them, of his doctrine and ministry, more particularly as opposed to a loose and worldly profession of the gospel, and the abuse of evangelical truths, will not pass unnoticed.

3. But particularly we have here presented, under these interesting circumstances, and with immediate reference to his own case, a distinct, though concise, view of some of his sentiments, which have been often misapprehended and misrepresented. “ I could confusedly recollect very many things to be humbled for, and ashamed of : but *nothing that impeached the sincerity of my professed faith in Christ, and love to him.* My hope was that of a sinner, throughout saved by grace : yet I was satisfied, that the aim of my heart, and the tenour of my conduct, since I professed the gospel, EVIDENCED *that I had built on the SOLE foundation by a LIVING faith.*”—Is there any thing in this which is justly chargeable with self-righteousness, or which even approaches to that error ? The utmost that it amounts to is that “ rejoicing in the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, he had had his conversation in the world,” which the same apostle does not scruple to express, who teaches us to “ *rejoice in*

Christ Jesus" only, and exclaims, "God forbid that I should *glory*, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Christ is "THE SOLE FOUNDATION:" "by faith" alone we "build" upon him: but the *fruits* of faith are to be adduced, both now, and at the day of judgment, as "evidence" that our professed faith is "living," and not dead. This is the whole doctrine of EVIDENCES: yet many excellent persons cannot distinguish between adducing the fruits of faith as a *foundation* on which to rest for acceptance with God, and adducing them merely as a *proof* that we are builded upon Christ alone by a living faith: and thus they unintentionally give countenance to those who deery all appeal to evidences, because, it is to be feared, they have no satisfactory evidences to appeal to, in support of their own pretensions to the Christian state and character.

We ought also, under the present head, to remark the perfect sobriety and soundness of the writer's method of proceeding, as to the question of his own state and prospects, even in the condition of extreme exhaustion and suffering which he describes. He is able "to give to every one that asketh of him a *reason*," which cannot be contravened, "of the hope that is in him." Is there, it may be confidently demanded, any thing fanatical, fanciful, or in any way contrary to "a sound mind," in what we are reviewing of the writer's proceedings upon a supposed dying bed?

4. But, lastly, it may perhaps be little satisfactory to some persons, that there was no more of joy and "sensible comfort," in his "views and experiences, when he had serious apprehensions of dying:" and I the rather advert to this subject, because the case was

pretty much the same, as he rather seems to anticipate that it might be, when death actually approached. But let us observe what he says was “about the state of his mind in this respect.

“For many hours of two successive nights, it was all but absolute suffocation, and the sense and dread of that was continually present to my mind: yet, bless the Lord, I was not left either to murmur or despond. I had very serious apprehensions of immediate death. . . . I had not any sensible comfort. Yet I thought of dying without emotion. . . . I felt the grand concern to be safe; and was willing to leave all below, to have done with suffering, sin, and temptation. . . . I tried to commit all I loved, and all I had laboured to effect, into the Lord’s hands: and I thought of recovering, as a sailor, just about to enter harbour, would of being ordered out to sea again. Yet I was willing if the Lord saw good.” But he adds, “I did not feel much of what the Apostle mentions of *desiring* to be with Christ; and I was convinced for that very reason, that my Christianity was of a small growth, though I trusted it was genuine:” —a sentence which produces an impression like that felt by the late distinguished Dean of Carlisle, when, comparing the exalted Christian state of his dying brother with the humility of his language, he exclaims, “So this is the man, who, when he is asked directly about his prospects in eternity, can give no other answer than, *I can’t say much!*” — Surely in such patience, such submission, such trust, even under the absence of “sensible comfort;” in such willingness, as the Lord should see good, either to “enter the harbour” of death, or to be “ordered out to sea again,”



on the stormy voyage of life :—surely there is in all this much of the highest attainments of Christianity. “ I can’t say much,” replied the dying Milner to the questions which were put to him : “ I rely on the promises for strength in the time of need . . . . There was a time, when I should have been very unhappy to have had so little of *sensible comfort* ; but I have seen reason to believe, that one of the most acceptable exercises of true Christian faith consists in patiently waiting God’s time, and in relying confidently on the written word. For many years, I have been endeavouring to live from day to day as a pensioner on God’s bounty. I learn to trust him, and he sends the *manna* without fail.”

From the period of the illness here described, my father gave up his Sunday morning lecture at Lothbury.

## CHAPTER XIII.

FROM HIS ACCEPTING THE LIVING OF ASTON SANDFORD TO THE FINAL DISPOSAL OF HIS COMMENTARY.

“ I SHALL now,” my father proceeds, “ draw this account to a conclusion ; as most of the subsequent events of my life are nearly as well known to my family as to myself.

“ It would be of little use or interest to detail my trials and difficulties at the Lock. At length, however, the time arrived, when I was satisfied in my conscience that it was my duty to recede. I always questioned whether I acted properly in coming thither, which often added to my depression amidst my other distresses : but I never thought, till this time, that I was allowed to quit my post. Indeed I had no opening, and used very often most seriously and dolefully to think, that, if compelled to leave it, I could not form the idea of any station, that I was likely to attain, for which I was at all suited, and in which I could conscientiously engage. Of a living I had no hope : the post of a curate could, in few situations, be compatible with my views and my unpopularity : a chapel would not clear expenses : and into an irregular engagement I was not disposed to enter.

“ But the affairs at the Lock seemed at last to

draw to a crisis.—When the Rev. Martin Madan, who had alone borne the title of chaplain, died, Mr. De Coetlogon and myself were appointed chaplains, instead of evening and morning preachers; but without any other alteration than that of the name. But various things concurred in convincing me, that I ought not to continue in this joint chaplainship with one, whom I could not approve: and at length I avowed my determination to that purport. This produced various effects and plans: and it was for some time doubtful, whether my removal, or my appointment as sole chaplain, would be the consequence. In this unsettled state of affairs, the living of Aston Sandford became vacant by the death of the rector, Mr. Brodbelt; and, as it was in the gift of John Barber, Esq. by virtue of his marriage with Miss Gines, who had been under my care at Olney, I applied for it. I never before had asked preferment of any one, and never in my life had any offered to me: but on this occasion I stated my circumstances and views to Mrs. Barber, and received an answer peculiarly gratifying to me. After some deliberation, I considered the business as settled: but a demur subsequently arose, under the idea that Mrs. B.'s mother had made a will, and bequeathed Aston to some other person. No will had before been noticed, but one was now found, which was not legally authenticated, but yet clearly showed that she desired the living to be given to the Rev. Richard Johnson, who had been for many years chaplain to the colony at New South Wales, and had just returned to England, unprovided for. On this I at once renounced all my pretensions, in his favour; though not, I

own, without feelings of regret. For two months I seldom thought about it, except when distressed with some vexation. But one morning Mr. Johnson called on me, and, when I congratulated him on his presentation to Aston, he, to my surprise, replied, that, as he had some ground of claim on government for a provision, he had been advised not to accept the living, and had come to say, that he wished me to have it.

“ The rest was soon settled in due order, and I was instituted at Buckden, July 22, 1801. I had been led to think, that the income was little more than 100*l.* a year, without a house; and that it could not easily be improved. But, on taking possession, I found that my predecessor had advanced the rent to 180*l.* free of all parish taxes; and that the tenant was willing to confirm this agreement to me. This business, therefore, was already arranged to my hands, though Mr. Brodbelt had not lived to receive any benefit from the arrangement himself.<sup>1</sup> But there was no habitable parsonage: and the circumstances were such, that I could not avoid, either building, or leave my family exposed to serious difficulties about dilapidations, when I should be removed. This left me, for some time after institution, in hesitation whether I should retain the living or not.

“ In the mean time it was determined at the Lock, that there should be only one chaplain; and, to preserve the appearance of impartiality, both chaplains

<sup>1</sup> When the sum expended by my father in the erection of a parsonage house at Aston is taken into the account, it will be found that the living could never be reckoned worth a clear hundred pounds a year to him.

were discharged, but with the allowance to become candidates for the vacant office. Such an arrangement was by no means pleasing to me; and I determined to accede to the dismissal, and go to my living. But this was not what had been purposed by those who formed, or concurred in the plan; and it would have enabled the party, which they meant to exclude, completely to triumph. I was, therefore, earnestly intreated to become a candidate, and at length consented to do so; and, no other candidate appearing, was chosen sole chaplain, March 25, 1802, though not without many efforts and stratagems to prevent it. At this period I resigned my lectureship in Bread Street.—I had now 170*l.* a year from the chapel and the asylum; but without a house. I had also something coming in from my living.

“ I now, however, became more doubtful than before, whether I should give up my living, or determine to go and reside upon it. I knew that the bishop would not long connive at nonresidence; and that it would be impracticable to hold the Lock, if I resided any considerable part of my time in the country. In the event, I came to the resolution of retiring to my living, induced by the following reasons :

“ 1. I thought that, if a chaplain could be found, wholly unconnected with the conflicting parties, which had so long struggled for victory at the Lock, and who inherited none of those prejudices which, I knew, must attach to me, peace and amity might succeed; and the important object of the united charities, together with the interests of true religion

in the chapel, might be pursued with a far better prospect of success.

“ 2. My engagements at the hospital and asylum, and the services in the chapel, with those which arose from the applications made to me by governors, added to my other urgent employments, were by far too much for me; allowing me no time for exercise or recreation: so that I had no prospect of proceeding with the publication of an improved edition of the Family Bible, on the plan on which I had begun it, without such close application, as I found, by experience, was injurious to my health and spirits.

“ My determination, however, was not made absolute at once; and I purposed to wait till I could resign my situation into the hands of an approved successor, before I publicly avowed my intention. In the mean time, I set about building a parsonage at Aston.

“ My resources for this purpose were, indeed, small: but I did not suppose the expense would be so heavy as it proved; and I expected considerably more emolument from my publication, than, for reasons already assigned, it produced. I also borrowed a small sum on the living; or rather secured a payment from it to my family, (according to the provisions of the Act for that purpose, in case of my decease within a given term:)—for I advanced the money myself, as I suppose is generally done in such cases.

“ My resources were further aided, just at this time, by a very unexpected legacy, the circumstances attending which may deserve to be explained; as the

whole formed a remarkable illustration of the text, *He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.*

“Some years before, I had become acquainted, as a minister, with a female servant, of whose character I entertained a high opinion, and who was reduced by disease, justly deemed incurable, to the painful necessity of going into a London workhouse, (where the society must be peculiarly distressing to pious persons,) unless some charitable provision could, in another way, be made for her. As I was entrusted by affluent and liberal friends with money for such purposes, I proposed to support her for a time, till further medical means could be tried. Her case, however, was soon given up, as beyond the reach of medicine; and it was thought she could not long survive. Her situation became known to some families in which she had lived; and, with the prospect of aid from them, I received her into my house, and undertook her support. From one family, in particular, in which she was greatly respected, I received at least 10*l.* a year on her account. This, with some other helps, enabled me to maintain her, without any improper expense to myself. Thus things proceeded, till I was preparing to leave London, by building a house on my living; when one of the family just mentioned, to whom I was known chiefly by means of this poor woman, died, and left me a legacy of 200*l.* I still received, for several years, the usual aid for her support, and, at the decease of another of the family, a further sum of 40*l.* Thus I have had the privilege, and at little charge, for at least

seventeen or eighteen years, of preserving from very great distress, a poor suffering diseased person, whom, I doubt not, the Saviour and Judge of the world will own, at the great day of final retribution, as intimately related to himself, and the heir of his kingdom. (Matt. xxv. 34—40. Mark iii. 34, 35.)—I would further observe, that this is the person, who was described in the “Christian Observer,” for July 1803, (p. 416,) as having expended all her savings, made in service, upon her aged and distressed parents, in the confidence that God would raise her up friends, in case the time should come when she should not be able to maintain herself. Such instances of the faithfulness of God to those who trust his providence, while they obey his commands, seem peculiarly worthy to be had in remembrance.”

As this person is still living, and under the care of the family, (though she took, as she fully apprehended, her last farewell of me, when I first went to college, in the year 1795!) little more can, with propriety, be here said concerning her. I may remark, however, that such are her fervent and affectionate piety, her cheerfulness, and the consistency of her temper and conduct, and (we are sure,) the earnestness of her prayers for all about her, that though she is unable to walk up and down stairs, or to get to church except by being carried; yet her presence is esteemed a privilege, by servants as well as by master and mistress, among those who have received her under their roof.<sup>†</sup>

<sup>†</sup> Since the above paragraph was written, the excellent person referred to (named Elizabeth Moulder,) has departed this life: but, as a brief memoir of her has appeared in the



“ This legacy,” my father proceeds, “ enabled me to go on with my building: but, before it was finished, the circumstance of having found as I thought, a proper successor, induced me immediately to resign the chaplainship of the Lock; and, after a sharp struggle, (the only contested election in which I was ever engaged, and in which I only contended by writing letters to different governors,) he was chosen, Feb. 3, 1803.

“ As soon as it became known, that I was about to leave the Lock, a number of individuals, governors and others, without my interposition, and without my knowing, for some time, that it was in hand, raised me a voluntary subscription of about 300*l*.

“ I thought myself, indeed, entitled, not as a donation, but as a remuneration, to something from the hospital. The whole stipend which I received, at first 80*l*., then, as joint chaplain, 100*l*., and then 150*l*. as sole chaplain, was charged to the chapel account; and certainly was little enough for my services in the chapel. So that, for above seventeen years that I continued at the Lock, I had attended the patients in the wards, as chaplain to the *hospital*, without any thing brought to account on that score, and, I must say, wholly without compensation from man.—I also preached a weekly lecture for the same term of years, without any remuneration, except a few presents. For this, however, I did not consider the charity as indebted to me: but I did for the other. But as others did not see that I had any “ Christian Guardian,” and is now published, with additions, as a separate tract, I forbear adding more concerning her in this place.

claim on the *equity* of the governors, I expressed a determination not to receive any thing from the charity as a *gratuity*; because I have always thought, that corporate bodies are under a responsibility for the use of the funds committed to their management, which admits only of the payment of just debts, and equitable compensations for services received, and not of the liberality of gratuitous donations.

“ During the whole time that I was at the Lock, and indeed for some years before, the receipts from the chapel were small, compared with what they had formerly been; and, in this way, I was but unsuccessful in my attempts to serve the charity. But, if the vulgar proverb, ‘A penny saved is a penny gained,’ be founded in truth, I must take more credit to myself, in respect to the finances, than has been allowed me. Perhaps it would be found, if the case were fully investigated, that as many hundreds were saved annually, in the management of the institution, by those friends whose plans I supported, and aided by measures more appropriately my own, as fell short in the income from the chapel, at its lowest depression. This, at least, is certain, though but little known, that in the dearest times, when bread (the main article of provision in the hospital,) was four times the price, and other articles of consumption double the price they had been, more patients were cured, and the charity had more resources, than in the ‘golden days,’ when the income of the chapel was three times as great.

“ When I was appointed sole chaplain, doleful forebodings were expressed of the ruinous consequences which must follow: but, by a concurrence of

circumstances, the single year, that I continued in that situation, was peculiarly productive both to the hospital and the asylum; and I left the united charities much richer at the end of the term, than they were at its commencement.

“ I would only add on this subject, that I can rejoice in the testimony of my conscience before God, that I uniformly did my best, often amidst many censures, and against much opposition, to promote the secular interests of the charities, as far as was consistent with the great object of both them and the chapel—bringing sinners to repentance and salvation; and that I never suffered my own gratification, ease, interest, or credit, to warp me from that line of conduct, which I deemed incumbent on me: and that, at least, I was enabled to defeat very many attempts, the success of which, it was afterwards allowed, would have been highly detrimental.

“ Having made every requisite arrangement, I removed to Aston in the spring of 1803, and have here lived nearly nine years in quiet and privacy; with the opportunity of pursuing my studies to far greater advantage than in town, and of reserving to myself time for recreation and exercise. The village is one of the smallest in the kingdom: two farm houses, a few labourers' cottages, and the newly erected parsonage, containing together about seventy inhabitants, young and old, form the whole of it; without alehouse, shop, or mechanic of any kind. Still, however, there is some opportunity of usefulness: the small church is generally well attended on the Lord's day: and exemption, to a considerable degree,

from parochial duties leaves me at leisure for other services.

“ Since I came to this place, I have completed the second edition of the Family Bible, with the addition of marginal references; have published a third edition; and am now preparing a fourth. I have collected and printed all my other previous works, (with the exception of Bunyan’s Pilgrim with notes,) in five volumes, octavo; have published several sermons; and, during the last year (1811,) have written Remarks on the ‘ Refutation of Calvinism.’

“ Here I close, for the present, at least, this narrative. I might add many things concerning my family,—in respect of which God has specially favoured me; so that many have wished me to say, what methods I took, which were crowned with such success. To this I must answer, that few things are looked back on by me with less satisfaction, than *my own conduct* in respect to my children, except in one particular, which appears to have been the grand secret,—namely, that I have always sought for them, as well as for myself, IN THE FIRST PLACE, *the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.*”

My father’s sentiments and practice concerning education must receive distinct notice hereafter; when both parts of the above remarkable sentence, with which he concludes his narrative, will demand our attention. At present, therefore, I content myself with applying to it the sentiment of an acute observer,—‘ that a man always perceives his deficiencies most in those things in which he most excels.’

Here then we take leave of the document which

has thus far been our guide. My father never made any subsequent addition to it: and, for the remainder of his history, recourse must be had to what recollection may furnish, or the letters which passed between the various branches of the family may supply. Though his narrative was written in 1812, he has, in fact, given the story of his life only to the period of his removal to Aston, in 1803, except in what relates to his Commentary; the account of which has, in a former chapter, partly from his own manuscript, and partly from other sources, been carried down to the decision of the Court of Chancery, in 1813. In the remainder of the present chapter, we shall detail such particulars as can be collected, and seem worthy of being recorded, to the same date, or somewhat later.

In doing this, we may, in the first place, advert to certain *visits* which he paid during the period in question.

Of these, two were made to Hull, in the summers of 1806 and 1811. In the course of the former he passed on to York, Leeds, and Huddersfield, where, as well as at Hull, he met with that respectful and cordial reception which his works had prepared for him, though he had hitherto been personally a stranger. On this occasion he made the acquaintance of three eminent persons, all since deceased; the venerable William Hey, Esq. and the Rev. Miles Atkinson, of Leeds, and the Rev. William Richardson, of York. The last-named penetrating observer of mankind, was forcibly struck with his character, which he had always highly esteemed at a distance,

and now still more admired on a nearer view. He afterwards made some observations to me on the subject, which led me, at a later period, to express a wish that he would write me a letter upon it; but he said it was too late for him to make the attempt. I remember two points which he noticed. One was my father's constant devotion to his great object: in whatever company he was, or whatever subject was introduced, he naturally and easily made it subservient, in the end, to the great religious design for which he lived. The other point was, that, with all his talents and industry, and in all his writings, he had done nothing for display; he had consecrated all his efforts to utility, and had sacrificed nothing to reputation, any more than to interest.—With his preaching, Mr. R. was somewhat surprised, on account of its abounding with familiar illustration, so much more than he would have expected from his writings. It may be remarked, however, that Mr. R. heard him address only a week-night congregation. One of the illustrations referred to, which he used on that occasion, was as follows: He supposed the common objection made against insisting so much upon faith, and the inward work of religion on the heart; and that the objector should urge, 'good works are every thing: if we can but bring men to live well, we need not trouble ourselves so much about these doubtful and mysterious matters.' 'This,' said he, 'is as if a man should come into a garden, and, finding the gardener busy in grafting his trees, should tell him that fruit was every thing, and that all this, which he was engaged in, seemed a great waste of labour.'

The gardener would reply, 'True, fruit is every thing; but then I know that this is the only way to obtain good fruit.'

Twice also he visited Bristol, once in 1809, and again in 1813. In the former of these journeys, he preached at several places in Wiltshire and Somersetshire: but of Bath, he remarks, "I was almost enchanted with the beauties of nature and art, beyond any thing I ever saw before: but no opening for preaching there." His second journey to Bristol was, by request of the Church Missionary Society, to assist at the formation of that auxiliary association, which has since yielded such effective aid to the parent institution. His reception at Bristol was very gratifying; and the regard borne him was afterwards testified in a very practical manner; as, in its proper place, we shall take occasion to state.

In 1812, having gone to see a friend at Rogate, in Sussex, he accepted an invitation to visit Portsmouth; where he was received with all possible kindness by Commissioner and Mrs., now Sir George and Lady Grey.

His last journey to any considerable distance was in 1813, to Cambridge, where his only daughter (who had been married about two years before) then resided. Here again he met with the most kind and cordial reception from various members of the University, and had reason to believe that his preaching, expositions, and conversation, were very useful. He says a few months afterwards, "My visit there, to which I was uncommonly reluctant, seems to have been greatly blessed;" and he adverts, in particular, to the late Dr. Jowett, then recently deceased, as

having expressed to several persons how much he had felt himself excited by what passed. To have contributed, in any degree, to arm, as it were, an excellent and distinguished character for his last conflict, seems to have afforded him peculiar satisfaction.

In this journey an accident occurred, in the overturning of the coach, which proved fatal to a fellow traveller.—From about this period, my father began to complain of a topical affection, (threatening cancer,) which henceforward confined him to his own neighbourhood, and for some time excited alarming and gloomy apprehensions; which, however, were happily never realized to the extent that was dreaded.

The next subject to which we will advert is that of his publications during this period.

He has observed near the close of the preceding narrative, that he had published several sermons. Soon after his settlement at Aston, he was called to preach a funeral sermon for the Rev. Jeremiah Newell, vicar of Great Missenden, which he published, with a brief memoir annexed, for the benefit of Mr. N.'s family; and the attention thus called to their circumstances happily proved the means of a comfortable provision being made for them.—In May 1804, he accepted the invitation of the London Missionary Society, to preach one of their anniversary sermons, which he did, at St. Saviour's Church, Southwark, prefixing to the published sermon the motto, "Is there not a cause?" (1 Samuel xvii. 29,) and justifying his pleading for that society, as well as for the one with which he was more immediately connected.—In 1808, he was again called upon to



bewail and commemorate a deceased brother, and old friend, the Rev. Thos. Pentycross, A.M. “more than thirty-three years vicar of St. Mary’s, Wallingford.” The sermon is entitled “The Duty and Advantage of remembering deceased Ministers.” In 1810, the death of a very pious missionary on the western coast of Africa, the Rev. J. C. Barneth, who had been for a considerable time under his instruction at Aston, led him to preach and publish a sermon, with reference to that event, on “the Spirit and Principles of a genuine Missionary:” the text, Acts xx. 24: “None of these things move me,” &c. In June 1810, he preached, at the church of St. Lawrence Jewry, London, and afterwards published, a Sermon in behalf of the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews: the text, Zech. viii. 23.—In 1811, at the request of the Church Missionary Society, he delivered an address to two of their missionaries proceeding to Africa; which was published in the appendix to the Society’s] Twelfth Report. And in the year following, he preached, at St. Antholin’s, Watling Street, before the governors of the London Female Penitentiary, on their fifth anniversary. The sermon was published at their request, and is entitled, “Joy in Heaven,” being on the text, Luke xv. 10.

The only extensive work in which he engaged, during these years, in addition to the improvement and repeated publication of his Commentary, was that of which he himself has already made mention, “Remarks on the Bishop of Lincoln’s (now Winchester’s) Refutation of Calvinism.” It appeared first in two volumes octavo: but was subsequently remodelled and published, in 1817, in one large

volume. The collection of his *Theological Works*, in five volumes octavo, was published in numbers, between the years 1805 and 1808.

It has been already noticed, that at Aston my father became the tutor of the persons preparing to go out as missionaries under the Church Missionary Society. This service he continued about the space of seven years, from 1807 to 1814. I find its commencement thus stated in the Society's Eighth Report:—"On Mr. Dawes's removal from Bledlow, the Rev. Thomas Scott, rector of Aston Sandford, near to Bledlow, added most seasonably to the many proofs which he had given of warm interest in the objects of the society, by acceding to the wish of your committee, in taking charge of the missionaries. As they could not be accommodated in Mr. Scott's house, they are placed in a pious family near him, and enjoy the daily advantage of his assiduous and affectionate instruction. Your committee will only add on this subject, that his report of their diligence, improvement, and piety, is of the most satisfactory nature."—The approaching termination of this engagement is thus adverted to in the Fourteenth Report: "The health of the Rev. Thomas Scott, the venerable teacher of the society's missionary students, being seriously impaired, the seminary will be established, as soon as practicable, in the house of the society."

The persons who came under his instruction in this capacity were several of them Englishmen, who have since received ordination; but the majority, Germans, in general Lutheran clergymen. All of them went

forth as missionaries into the heathen world, and most of them are now usefully employed in that character; though some have died in the service. The sentiments of grateful and affectionate veneration which they, without exception, conceived for their instructor, were publicly testified by them, as they successively took leave of the society to repair to the stations assigned them; and were more privately expressed in the correspondence, which, as opportunity offered, they afterwards kept up with him.

The progress which they made in their studies was highly creditable; in some instances remarkable. I remember to have visited Aston, when four of them, who had come to my father with scarcely any knowledge of language beyond their mother tongue, were reading Cicero and Horace, the Greek tragedians, the Hebrew prophets, and the Koran, (Arabic,) all in the originals.

The subject of the study of Arabic may deserve a little more distinct notice as it respects the tutor, not less than the pupils. In June 1808, I received a letter in which it was observed: "Mr. Pratt (the Society's secretary) begs that your father will begin to teach the missionaries Susoo and Arabic, of neither of which languages has he any knowledge! He felt very uncomfortable about this for a day or two. However, he has now begun to study these new languages with them." And in November following he himself wrote to me as follows:

"With all my other engagements, I am actually, in addition to what I before taught the missionaries, reading Susoo and Arabic with them. The former we have mastered without difficulty, as far as the

printed books go ; and hope soon to begin translating some chapters into the language. But, as to the latter, we make little progress ; yet so far that I have no doubt of being able to read the Koran with them, should they continue here. It is in itself a most difficult language : . . .but my knowledge of the Hebrew gives me an advantage.”

To say nothing of the Susoo, an imperfect African dialect, lately reduced to writing, those who are acquainted with the feelings of men in general, when approaching their grand climacteric, and with their capacity for new acquisitions, will best appreciate the energy and resolution displayed in his thus calmly encountering and mastering, at this time of life, with all his other engagements and all his infirmities, the formidable difficulties of the Arabic language. The Hebrew, likewise, which was his auxiliary on this occasion, had been entirely resumed, and almost learned, since his fifty-third year.

But the most edifying subject of contemplation will be, the spirit and views with which he carried on this service of instructing the missionaries, for some considerable time after he had found reason to complain —“ My chief difficulty is about my missionary pupils : I find the confinement to my chair, &c., in teaching them, almost insupportable : yet I know not how to give it up, till some other plan is formed.”— What his views were, may be learned from a letter addressed to a clergyman, who, understanding that he was about to relinquish the task, had thoughts of proposing to succeed him in it. He writes to him as follows :

“ November 18, 1813. I have not given up the

tuition of the missionaries, though I have urged the committee to look out for and form a more permanent seminary. Were I able, and external matters convenient for their reception, I should count it the best employment of my latter days. But every thing here is wholly inconvenient, and the sedentary posture for so long a time is very uneasy to me: nor indeed is it likely that I shall long be able to go on with it. But I have a strong reason at present for not giving up the service, if I can help it. . . . If, however, a permanent seminary can be founded for the missionaries, I shall not suffer any personal concern of mine to interfere; and indeed I shall greatly rejoice in it. . . . As far as I have seen and heard, they give as little trouble as men can do; and do most things for themselves. They have hitherto been much respected and loved in the neighbourhood; and have at least done nothing to hinder my usefulness. Several of them, in matters which I am not able to do, have been a good deal helpful to me; and they are, I think, a credit to the cause. . . . I think it probable that, remembering the way in which I, in a very slight manner comparatively, brought you on in Greek and Latin; and receiving further hints on my more matured method of teaching *grown men*; you would be more likely to adopt what is useful in my plans, than a stranger would be.—But I only teach languages *in ordine ad* teaching divinity. The missionaries, as they have hitherto come to me, have been pious men, but superficial theologians; and my morning expositions have been their lectures on divinity,—I hope of good use. This part therefore, in whatever form it is put, must be *the main object*.—

In respect of the Hebrew, I have little doubt but with the application of an hour, or half an hour a day, regularly, you would soon be competent; and your situation would afford you many helps: but not so, I fear, as to the Arabic. . . . I am persuaded I could, in six weeks, put you into the way of teaching yourself Arabic, far better than I could teach myself after eighteen months. If you wish to attempt it, get Erpenius's Grammar—not Richardson's. There you will have *pointed* examples, and short clear rules; in which Richardson is affectedly deficient. You will want no other book for a time but Erpenius. It contains, besides the grammar, Arabic proverbs and fables, and one book of the Koran, all pointed—the history of Joseph, worse murdered than his brothers ever purposed to murder him. . . . As a great proportion of our missionaries have been Germans, and perhaps will be, were I as young as you, or not more than twenty years older, and were I about to undertake the service, I would, if possible, learn German. It would be a permanent advantage; and indeed it is almost impracticable to go on, with effect, without it. . . . . But let me beg of you, in conclusion, very seriously to consider and pray over the vast importance of the undertaking, and the immense responsibility connected with it. Your example, spirit, views, and instructions, will be almost inseparably connected with the conduct, spirit, and instructions of those, who are to give idolaters and Mohammedans their impression of the Christian religion, in many parts of the world. If they be such as St. Paul would approve, the true honour and usefulness of such a permanent situation will exceed that of any metropolitan in christendom:

and, if the contrary, the fatal effects may be incalculable. It is a service to be engaged in with much seriousness and prayer—*Who is sufficient for these things?*—and in entire dependence on the grace of the Lord Jesus; I had almost said, *with fear and trembling*. Yet I would not discourage you. If *magna reverentia debetur puero*, you may add, *major evangelista*. You should study well what St. Paul says to Timothy on these subjects; especially 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11. My prayers, and any counsel which I can give, shall not be wanting. May God fit you for the service, appoint you to it, and prosper you in it!”

In this connexion it is natural to mention the lively interest taken by my father in all the institutions, having for their object the diffusion of Christianity in the world. It was impossible that one, who had prayed so long and so earnestly for the extension of Christ's kingdom among men, should witness the Christian world at length awaking from its slumbers, and beginning to put forth its powers in a manner more becoming the character of the religion which it professes, without heartfelt gratitude and joy; or without exerting himself, by every means in his power, to cherish the rising spirit. We have already seen that he preached and published sermons for several institutions. Immediately on his becoming resident at Aston, he determined to make an annual collection in his congregation for the Church Missionary Society. Though it was thought by some rather visionary to expect any thing worth notice in such a situation, he resolved to make the attempt, and to persevere in it;

convinced that, by exciting an interest on behalf of the salvation of others, Christian ministers most materially promote the success of their labours among their own people. His first collection, beyond all expectation, exceeded 17*l.*; the third 24*l.*; the sixth 31*l.*; and the total amount stated in the report for 1820 is 303*l.* 18*s.* 10*d.* When the obscurity of the parish is considered, I hope this result will encourage other clergymen to “go and do likewise.”

The Bible Society also shared his warmest attachment, and its success afforded him the most unfeigned joy. Several of his latest excursions were made to assist at the meetings of its auxiliary societies. The substance of two of his speeches on these occasions, one delivered at High Wycombe in 1812, and the other at the meeting of the Vale of Aylesbury society, held at Haddenham in 1816, was, at the request of the respective committees, reduced to writing, and published with their reports. The last of these societies, since become one of considerable extent, and dignified with high patronage, may be regarded as having originated with his family; and its associations are spread through the neighbouring villages all around Aston. The former of the speeches referred to was delivered just at the period of Dr. Marsh's opposition to the society; and exhibits a specimen of terse and pointed argumentation. The closing sentences may be introduced here as illustrative of its author's spirit with regard to these societies.

“I conclude as I began; ‘Precious Bible, what a treasure!’ *the light of our feet, and the lanthorn of our paths*: our guide in youth, our comfort in old



age, our antidote against the fear of death. The longer I live, the more I feel for those who have not the word of God. I am growing old, and feel the infirmities of age. I know I must soon die. I am a sinner against God: I must appear before him in judgment: I must exist for ever, in happiness or misery: but I can find no light, no hope, no comfort, except from the Bible. What *should* I do without the Bible, and that Saviour whom the Bible reveals to me?—While, then, the Bible is our own invaluable treasure, the source of all our knowledge, hope, and comfort, let us do what we can to communicate the precious treasure to others also, all over the world. We can do but little individually, it is true; yet great multitudes, cordially uniting, may effect much. Time was, since I can remember, when, if I had possessed the means in other respects, I should hardly have known how to *reach out* the blessing, beyond my own contracted circle. But this society, and others of a similar nature, so to speak, *lengthen my arms*; and, by concurring heartily in the designs of those who conduct them, we may stretch out our hands to the inhabitants of the east and of the west—of Africa, of Asia, of America, as well as of Europe—and give to them *the light of life*. Let us then *do what we can*, while here; and so *wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*.”

Before bringing the present chapter to a close, we may advert to the general effect of my father's residence and labours at Aston. Upon the whole he found it a more encouraging situation than any other in which he had been placed, since he quitted the curacy of Ravenstone. In bad weather indeed the state

of the roads was such, that a great number of his hearers were unable to reach the church; and, on various accounts, the congregation fluctuated from time to time, especially after the opening of a Baptist meeting in the neighbourhood, to which no small pains were taken to draw all persons who manifested any religious seriousness; and which was, in consequence, a source of considerable obstruction and uneasiness to him. Yet, in general, the church was well attended, and much good was done. Many careless and worldly persons, and not a few who had led even profligate lives, were "converted from the error of their ways," and "brought forth fruits meet for repentance:" and a considerable body of evidently pious and well instructed Christians was formed around him: though he had to lament, and did deeply lament over many even of his nearest neighbours, who still held out against all his admonitions and his prayers. Nor was this all: by the earnest and active character of his combined piety and benevolence, an impression was made on the surrounding neighbourhood; an interest was excited in behalf of religious institutions; schools were established, and associations formed for the relief of the sick and needy, where previously no such things had been thought of. To stir up Christians "to improve their talents" was a prominent object of his instructions; and, while he set them so eminent an example of the duty inculcated, "his labour was not," and could not be, "in vain in the Lord."

A case, in which his assistance was solicited soon after he took up his abode at Aston, may also well deserve to be mentioned here, not only [as it led to

the settlement of his second son in the situation which he still occupies, but especially for the extraordinary display of Christian benevolence and liberality which it furnishes. Mr. John West, a native of the village of Gawcott, (a hamlet of the parish of Buckingham,) born and brought up in very humble life, and living to the end of his days in a style little superior to that of a country labourer, had realized, chiefly by dealing in thread lace, (the manufacture of the county,) a fortune of several thousand pounds. Having himself learned, chiefly from the unassisted study of the scriptures, the value of a Saviour, the great importance of Christian truths, and the great privilege of religious worship, he looked with feelings of compassion and deep concern upon the irreligious state of his native village, containing nearly five hundred inhabitants, without any place of worship among them, and situate a mile and a half from their parish church. He, in consequence, formed the generous purpose of supplying entirely from his own funds, the deficiency which he deplored. Nor did he content himself, as many have done, with making the requisite provision by will for the posthumous execution of his design: he resolved immediately to give up, during his lifetime, 4000*l.* or 5000*l.* for the purpose of building and endowing a chapel at Gawcott. Accordingly the chapel was promptly raised; but, the founder being a decided churchman, and determined to have his chapel regularly connected with the establishment, and, at the same time, to vest the patronage in such a manner as he thought most likely to secure its being served by a succession of truly pious ministers, he had now to encounter diffi-

culties which might easily have been foreseen, but which he had not anticipated. Under these circumstances my father's counsel and aid were sought; and, the business being subsequently turned over to my brother, whom Mr. W. offered to nominate as first minister of the chapel, it was at length through the friendly interposition of the Diocesan (the present Bishop of Winchester) with the vicar of Buckingham, brought to a successful issue. The chapel was opened under an episcopal licence, March 16, 1806, and consecrated May 14, following. The founder lived to see and rejoice in the happy effects of his pious benevolence, in the improved state of the village and neighbourhood, till September, 1814, when he died in the seventy-eighth year of his age. My brother published a funeral sermon on the occasion, with a memoir prefixed, in which some important reflections are introduced, on the great disadvantage under which existing laws place the establishment, as compared with the various descriptions of dissenters, in respect to the erection of churches or chapels; and which actually amounts to the exclusion of the people, in many country hamlets, from divine worship and religious instruction.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### LETTERS BELONGING TO THE PERIOD OF THE PRECEDING CHAPTER.

WE now proceed to my father's correspondence during the period we have been reviewing. We will present some extracts bearing upon different topics.

#### I. On the work of the ministry.

The discouragement arising from the want of apparent success is a feeling to which, it has been already observed, those who are labouring in "the work of the Lord," against all the obstacles of this evil world, must be often exposed. To such persons the following observations may be both interesting and useful.

" March 11, 1804. You express great discouragement as to the success of your ministerial labours; of course you mean the *visible* success. This I am convinced, is a temptation to which you are peculiarly exposed, and peculiarly accessible: yet, if it once get fast hold of your mind, it will have a very unfavourable effect on the aggregate of your usefulness in future life. . . . I trust God has given you a simple desire of serving and glorifying him as a *Christian*: nay, I cannot but think you set out with such a desire of glorifying him as a *minister*, by directing all your studies and labours to that grand object, the salvation of sinners; subordinating all other pursuits to it. Now, if this be so, can you believe that he

intends, after all, to leave you finally to labour in vain, and spend your strength to little or no purpose? Should such a feeling possess your mind, you may not cease to serve God as a Christian; but that fire which must animate the zealous minister will be smothered, or at least damped; and you will gradually get to seek that satisfaction in other engagements, studies, and pursuits, which the ministry of the gospel has not afforded, and which you prematurely concluded that you, in particular, were not to derive from it. In consequence you may render yourself respectable, perhaps more so, in the world; but no literary honours, no worldly prosperity or reputation, no usefulness in any other line, can satisfy the ardent desire of my heart in respect of you, if you be not useful, I will say *extensively* useful, as a minister. Without a measure of enthusiastic earnestness in the pursuit of his object, you know no man succeeds *greatly* in any thing: beware then of that discouragement, which (to use your own word,) tends to *paralyze* your efforts. Remember, that there is *joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth*; (I preached on that subject this afternoon :) and, supposing only one in a year should be brought to repentance, what else can you do that would cause joy to holy angels? . . . . Perhaps, at first setting out, you might be ready to think that a style of preaching, which was generally acceptable to pious people, was all that needed to be aimed at; and that success would follow of course. It may be necessary for you to learn, that pious persons hear more for themselves than for their unconverted neighbours; and that you must risk dissatisfying some of them, if you would *declare the*

*whole counsel of God, and keep yourself pure from the blood of all men.* Perhaps you looked at some individuals as models, and too much proposed imitating them; though rather cramping the energy of your spirit by so doing. I say *perhaps* in these things, merely to excite a question. But my prevalent opinion is, that you *are* useful, but do not *see* the effect. Even at Ravenstone I remember complaining in a new year's sermon, that, for a whole twelvemonth, I had seen no fruit of my preaching: yet it appeared, within the course of the next twelvemonth, that not less than ten or twelve had been brought *to consider their ways*, during that discouraging year; besides others, I trust, that I did not know of. *Cast thy bread on the waters, and it shall be found after many days. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou canst not tell which shall prosper, or whether both shall be alike good.* Endeavour, by laying open the holy law very particularly, to follow men into all the parts of their lives, and actions, and thoughts. Dwell much on the nature and effects of regeneration, repentance, faith; and on the peculiarities of the gospel, especially the love of Christ. Pray much for direction, assistance, and a blessing; and for simplicity of *intention* and *dependence*. Try not to be *stationary*; but *to bring forth things new as well as old*; that your *profiting* may appear unto all: and wait patiently in this way. Or, in the apostle's words, *Give thyself wholly thereunto: Take heed to thyself and to the doctrine; continue in them; for, in so doing, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.* In this way, I have no

doubt that you will eventually find a large number to be your *crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ*; nay, many to be your comfort here. But *waiting* is as necessary as preaching and praying."

In another letter: "The Lord generally does good to us, and then *by us*. . . . Should a dozen careless sinners, amidst hundreds of drowsy hearers, be effectually awakened, this would make all the rest begin to look about them. For such an event I would look, and hope, and pray, and preach such sermons as seemed best calculated for the effect; saying to all that might object, *Is there not a cause?*"

To a young minister, about to remove to London, he wrote as follows:

"July 2, 1807: You know I am not peculiarly favourable to young ministers fixing in London, where almost all are either *hugged* or *kicked* to death, according as they are popular or unpopular; and that I am partial to a country village of tolerable size. . . . I hope you will redouble your earnestness in prayer as the importance of your station is increased. I should think that considerable time employed in study of the scriptures, and such books as elucidate the scriptures, is so needful on entering on a station in that large city, in order that your ministry may be less and less like the superficial declamation of too many young ministers, that, unless necessity urges, it would be best not to be encumbered with pupils at present. I should be glad to hear that you wrote a good deal, though you should not use what you write, either in preaching or print: it gives a man a readiness, a correctness of thinking and expression on theological subjects, and a fulness, which mere reading will never



do. Have, however, something to do, which may be a reason for declining many of those gossiping unprofitable visits, in which so many London ministers waste, and worse than waste, their hours.”

Some publications, which appeared about that time occasioned the following remarks in a letter to a lady, whose connexions lay in the most respectable classes of religious society.

“ I am not sorry for the opportunity of speaking my mind, not only on this, but on some other publications, which have a measure of the same tendency. It may, I think, without partiality, be said, that the body of men, called *evangelical clergymen*, (I do not say who gave them that name—I did not,) are the persons, at least within the church, from whom there is the greatest hope of a revival of genuine Christianity. Now, is it possible that you, and your pious and sensible friends, can think, that bringing forward, in so public a manner, by a professed friend, without *mercy* or *distinction*, all their *real* and *supposed* faults, is the way to strengthen their hands, and promote their success? The tendency of such a system is, to make the young people, especially, hear our sermons, and take up our books, not only with prejudice, but with a secret desire of showing their discernment, by discovering defects in style, in manner, &c.; something ‘vulgar, and methodistical, or sectarian,’ or like it. Now can this subserve their edification? Such writers as the Monthly Reviewers have, in many instances, pointed out inaccuracies, or colloquial and low expressions, in my writings; and I have thanked them, and profited by their remarks: but this way of indefinitely speaking of defects, and faults, and vulgarity, and casts of sectarianism, and

the like, without specifying particulars, excites prejudices, and gives no opportunity of avoiding them. I have, for almost thirty years, been labouring to weed out of my writings, and to induce others to do the same, every unscriptural expression, from whatever quarter or company derived: but no distinction is made between this and the *slang* of a sect or party. Nay, it seems scriptural language itself must be changed for more modern terms; and then modern doctrines will supplant those of the apostles. It is also to me a very extraordinary thing, that wisdom and prudence should be the young man's virtues, and rashness the old man's fault. This does not accord to facts in general. In reality, I do believe publications of this kind tend to render young ministers more afraid of being *zealous* than of being *lukewarm*. They teach them to call the *fear of man*, prudence: and the whole tends to form an inefficient ministry; some part, at least, of evangelical truth coldly, formally, cautiously stated, with little application. And, after all, I must prefer the Newtons, Venns, nay Berridges, the old warm-hearted men, with all their imperfections, to these *sang froid* young men."

With this extract may be connected another addressed to myself, in November of the same year, which was afterwards made the basis of a paper in a periodical publication.<sup>1</sup> These heads of the paper may sufficiently explain his sentiments in this place.

"You wish for my opinion on the controverted question, how far the faults of upright ministers are proper subjects of public discussion? a question at this era peculiarly interesting, as more is said by many

<sup>1</sup> Christian Guardian, May, 1810.

professed friends on *their* faults, real or imaginary, than on those of any other description of persons; at least with more minuteness. 1st, I do not think any order of men privileged by exemption from *proper* investigation, and *just* censure of their conduct: nor would such an exemption be an advantage, but the contrary. 2d, I think that in examining and censuring any body of men, either they should be viewed *alone*; or, if another body be brought forward with them, the faults of *both* bodies should be specified with equal severity and equal candour: else where is impartiality? 3d, I think that, in order to this investigation and censure, some precise rule should be previously laid down, (for instance, of the evangelical clergy, the Bible and Prayer Book,) and nothing charged as a fault which cannot be shown to be such by this precise rule. Otherwise, opinion, however erroneous, or custom, however corrupt, or fancy, however capricious, may be made the standard, according to the prejudices of the *soi-disant* judge. 4th, I think that the real excellencies of upright characters, allowedly such, (and especially of those from whom the best hope of good to the rising generation of mankind, in general, arises,) should be prominently marked, when *faults* are to be pointed out; and nothing aggravated; nay, all touched as leniently as the hope of amending them will allow: and if, in any collective body, some individuals are excepted from the general charge, they should not only be exempted from the censure conveyed, but honourably distinguished. It can answer no good purpose needlessly to sink the credit and influence of the only men who seem likely to do extensive good among us;

which has lately been done to a great degree. 5th, I think that, in every thing respecting style, manner, &c., the charge should be specific and precise, not vague and general; that we may know what to correct: which is not the case in many of the censures passed. Lastly, God gives one gift to one, another to another: the treasure is *in earthen vessels*: but ideal perfection, like that of the hero of a novel, is made the standard, and all in real life are despised for falling short of it."

To one of his sons on a sermon on Matt. vii. 24—27.

"I wished to write a few lines to you concerning your sermon at ———. I thought it excellent except in one particular: namely, the peculiar doctrines of the gospel were not sufficiently exhibited: Christ was not prominent enough.—You will give me credit for this, that I have never aimed to urge any of my own peculiar sentiments upon you; but, having stated my views, have left you to judge for yourself. But, if a hint on this occasion may be useful, I am confident you will take it in good part.—Many think we ought to keep to the text and context, with little deviation to other parts of scripture: and in some cases this may be right. We should however consider, both the circumstances in which the text was spoken, (namely in the present instance before the full declaration of the gospel, and as making way for it;) and the case of those whom we address. You seemed aware that many of your hearers had got some notions of the gospel, without a proper view of its practical tendency: but you did not seem equally aware, that, for want of a more explicit statement of the doctrines concerning justification, all who lean to

antinomianism would be ready to say, ‘ You see they cannot preach their works, &c. without almost forgetting the gospel.’ In such a case our course should be, to show how our practical instruction *springs out of* the doctrines of the gospel.—And indeed, on such a text, this is equally needful for the sake of those who deduce from it a sort of mixed ground of justification, partly by faith in Christ, and partly by works.—What I mean is simply this; that more fully and explicitly showing the foolish man’s faith to be the *dead* faith of St. James, and the wise man’s the *living* faith, the *faith which worketh by love*; and distinguishing between the will of God concerning us simply as rational creatures, made known in the law, and his will concerning us as sinners made known in the gospel; it may be shown, that not only is Christ the sole foundation, (which you clearly stated,) but that we build upon him *by faith alone*—only that *faith is not alone*, but is both attended with repentance, works by love, and produces obedience. We come to Christ as sick persons to a physician: we hear and follow his directions as to the means of grace, as well as obey his other commands, because we trust in him; and so we get the blessing: while others expect it by hearing alone, without acting according to his prescriptions.—On such subjects, especially in strange places, we should be very explicit.”

Of the soundness and great importance of these remarks there can be no doubt; nor any that “doing Christ’s sayings” necessarily includes that great fundamental “work of God—believing on him whom he hath sent;” regarding Jesus Christ as the “only foundation” that can be laid for our hopes, and a

living faith as the only means of “building upon him:” but it may well be doubted whether the particular passage in question sets the Saviour forth under this figure. “Building upon a rock,” or “building upon the sand,” is the *figure*: the thing *represented* by it is expressly said to be “doing Christ’s sayings,” as well as “hearing” them, or “hearing” them only, and “doing them not.”

My father, it is generally known, was accustomed to use a short prayer, adapted to the occasion, before his sermons; to preach extemporary, or, more properly speaking, unwritten sermons; and those of a greater length than is in many places usual. On the first of these practices, he wrote rather urgently, after a visit to Hull in 1811:

“I do greatly wish an alteration in your prayer before sermon. Here I do not urge you to pray *extempore*; but only to bring together some parts of different collects, or in some way to make your collect a prayer for assistance, and a blessing on the important service on which you are entering. It may be said that you pray for assistance and a blessing in private: but do you lay no stress on the concurrence of hundreds in prayer for this blessing? and, so to speak, on the *sympathy* excited in a congregation by a few words, not much, if at all, longer than your collect, in which the divine assistance and blessing are avowedly craved on the sermon? It appears to me often to electrify the congregation; and to produce the expectation and the desire of good, which is more especially needful. The collects are not calculated for this purpose: they do not express the special blessing wanted: and they lie more open to the ob-

jection of repeating prayers already offered, than what I contend for. I cannot express how much I felt this deficiency. I must be allowed to think, that we *have not* success, *because we ask not*, and do not stir up others to expect and ask the blessing from God only. I beg you will consider and pray over it. Every year convinces me more and more of the necessity of thus expressly asking the blessing from God, publicly, on our preaching.”

On the other points, I give the following brief extracts.

“ 1808. The fault of short sermons is, not that there is not as much said as the hearers can remember, but that there is not room for *explanation* and *application*; for entering into those minute particulars which most come home to the conscience. And, as to the length, what people are used to, they expect, and complain only of what exceeds it, be the stint more or less.”

“ 1812. I never heard a half-hour sermon, which did not either fail in particular instruction in doctrine and duty, or was not, in part, frustrated of its effect by too rapid delivery.”

“ 1809. The degree in which, after the most careful preparation for the pulpit, new thoughts, new arguments, animated addresses, often flow into my mind, while speaking to a congregation, even on very common subjects, makes me feel as if I was quite another man than when poring over them in my study. There will be inaccuracies: but generally the most striking things in my sermons were unpremeditated.”

“ February 12, 1812. What lies do men tell of

us evangelical and Calvinistic ministers! Witness Dr. ——'s sermon at Cambridge. We are not likely to fall under the woe denounced against those of whom *all men speak well*: but, if we enjoy the blessing of those concerning whom men *speak evil falsely, for Christ's sake*, it may console us for all the effects of their slanders. I have prayed for such persons more of late than formerly, in the use of the Litany; for 'all bishops, priests, and deacons,' for those who are 'in error, that they may be led into the way of truth;' and for all our 'slanderers,' &c.

"1804. I fear many are too timid, as many are harsh, rash, and unfeeling upon the subject. Nothing does so much harm as trying to keep fair with antisciptural and unholy preachers; which I fear, though less offensive than Mr. ——'s abuse, is as pernicious. May the Lord keep us from extremes!"

II. On provision for families, and the education of children, particularly those of ministers.

In reply to some questions concerning life insurance, in 1805, he made the following observations:

"Nor do I think it, in a religious view, liable to any other objection, than may be made to laying by money at all—which is in many cases allowable, and in several a duty; where it can be done consistently with equity and *charity*. If a man have faith strong enough, and urgent occasions call for it, he may perhaps do as well for his family, if he expends it in judicious charities. But, when it comes to this, that a man has more than he ought to expend on himself and his family, I should always advise him to put aside a certain portion for charitable purposes, before he counts the rest his own, either to spend or to lay



by. The proportion must be determined by a variety of circumstances, according to his conscience in the sight of God. In some cases I should think it proper to make a point of disposing in charity of at least as much as was laid by : and this I call *seed corn*."

"August 30, 1807. As far as my conscience was satisfied as to the question of *duty*, I never have allowed myself to hesitate about *events* or *consequences*. I cannot but conclude from the scriptures, that the Lord will provide for us and ours what is needful for them, at present and in future ; and that our concern is, to do our duty, and leave the rest to him, living and dying. This, I think, is especially the privilege of the *disinterested* and *laborious* minister : but I am sorry to say, that worldly prudence, and the desire of making provision for families, not only for necessary things, but for gentility and affluence, is, in my opinion, eating out the life of spirituality, and simple trust in the Lord, even among those who preach scriptural doctrine. The spirit of the commercial world, having long corroded the professors of the gospel, is now making havoc among ministers. The plan of marrying rich wives, or presiding over very lucrative academies, would have made St. Paul dolefully cry out, *All seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ*. I believe those who thus seem to ensure a provision for their families, or security against the effects which marriage may entail on a man of narrow income, are clogged in their ministry, nay sink in general estimation, and are excluded from usefulness, more than they are aware of. Indeed it is to me one of the most discouraging symptoms of the religious state of our land. I have been nearly

thirty-five years in orders; and, except during two years that I continued single, my regular income, as a minister, would never defray more than half my expenditure: yet, though often tried, I endeavoured to trust the Lord, and I have been provided for. Mr. Newton's story of the nobleman whom the king required to attend to *his* business, and he would take care of the nobleman's interest, has been of great use to me. . . . To those, who seem to think it *pitiable*, that your children are not previously provided for, I should fairly avow my sentiments, that the Christian, and above all the minister, is to *seek first the kingdom of God*, for himself and his children, and that God has expressly promised, that all else shall be *added*. *Your Father knoweth what things you have need of*. If I, a poor sinner, had 100*l.* to spare without any inconvenience, and knew that you really wanted it, should I not give it you? *How much more shall your heavenly Father, &c.*

“As to a *good education*, in the sense in which the term is often used, I had rather my daughters, or granddaughters, should know nothing more than to read and write, and do plain work, than send them (even if others would bear the expense,) to those seminaries of frivolity, vanity, and vice, in which such a *good education* is obtained. If brought up in the fear of God, and in useful knowledge, without affecting any thing superior, or genteel, . . . they will, at least, be creditable and respectable. . . . The *good education*, so called, cannot be had without habits, connexions, and associations of ideas, unfitting them for obscure domestic life. . . .

“I am a great friend to men's doing all *as well as*

*they possibly can* ; but an enemy to ministers being swallowed up in the employment of schoolmasters."

In the same strain he writes, January 26, 1809 : " In the path of duty, you may safely trust the Lord for a suitable provision, however probabilities may appear ; as my experience for many years abundantly proves. . . . While I do not materially object to your idea, that, if fairly in your power, it might be proper to make some provision for your family, I would exhort you, by all means, to watch against all anxiety, about either the present or the future, respecting them. Diligence, frugality, prudence, are duties ; but *events* are in the hands of God. *The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.* God can provide for your children without you, you cannot without him."

The following short sentence, in a letter of February 12, 1812, still manifests his supreme regard for the great concern, and indifference to temporal interests in comparison with it. " The grand mischief of *guardians* is, that even pious persons are so apt to consult the secular advantage of their wards, in preference to their spiritual good."

The following counsel to his youngest son, then on the eve of marriage, October 5, 1811, is such as it would have been for the happiness of thousands to have duly regarded. It is not necessary in order to the comfort or respectability of a clergyman, to raise his income to the level of a large expenditure ; but it is necessary to his comfort, his independence, and his usefulness, to keep down his expenses within the limits of his resources.

" Next to the great concerns of religion, nothing can be more important than frugality, in your present

situation and prospects, both to your comfort, respectability, and usefulness. If your *launch* be too splendid, you will be expected to keep it up: but a modest frugal appearance will damp such expectations, and make your future progress more easy and unobstructed: and you must not think that *mean*, which is your duty, and as much as you can well afford.—May the Almighty God our Saviour bless you in your soul and in your ministry! May his blessing be abundantly on you, and on your intended wife, and on all your undertakings!”

III. On the death of children and near friends; with further proofs of his tenderness and sympathy.

The following was written upon the supposition of the death of my second daughter.

“ March 15, 1805. We were all much affected at the unexpected account of poor Fanny’s very dangerous disorder, for we had hoped that, by proper means, her cold would soon have been removed; and we very sincerely sympathise with you. Whatever they may suppose who never experienced it, few things, at the time, more pain the heart than the loss of a child, even when young; and especially at the time when a thousand little circumstances render it more and more interesting. This I know by experience: yet, after a time, the very events, which filled my heart with anguish for a season, were looked back upon with a kind of melancholy pleasure. And, when I consider what a dangerous world we live in, I can almost rejoice to think that three of my children arrived, as I fully trust, at the place of rest, without encountering the perils and tempests of the passage. My prayer used to be, as the result of my deliberate judg-

ment, though not of my feelings, that, if the Lord had any thing for my children to do, they might be spared; but that they might not live to be the servants of sin, and to treasure up wrath: and I trust this prayer has been, or will be, fully answered.— You remember to have heard me tell of the time, when you were the only survivor of three children, and were dangerously ill of the same fever of which your sister had died; how my heart was almost broken: but I am persuaded this time of distress was peculiarly useful to me; and I often look back to it with admiring gratitude, when I reflect on the answer to my many prayers, which, with many tears, I then offered for you. And I doubt not that you will hereafter look back on your present trial, sharp as it is, in the same manner.—Really believing that every human being will exist to eternal ages, and that the children, at least of believers, dying before they are capable of committing actual sin, have the benefit of the new covenant; I consider the circumstance of being instrumental to the existence of those who shall be eternally happy, as a high privilege and favour; even though they be speedily taken from us: and I look forward, sometimes, with pleasure to the period, when I hope to meet again those who were early taken from me, as well as to be followed by those that survive me.

“ A variety of circumstances are often permitted to increase the anguish of our feelings on such occasions; and especially the reflection on something that either we or others have done wrong, which proved the *occasion* of the affliction. But, though we may have reason to blame the misconduct of others, or to

regret any mistake we may suppose that we have made,—and hence may learn something useful for the future ; yet the hand of God should be viewed, even in those events which take place by the folly and faults of men : and He has wise, righteous, faithful, and gracious reasons for what he did, and for what he permitted.

“ It is not to be expected that parents should not feel and grieve much, on these occasions ; and indeed the very end of the providential dispensation would fail of being answered, if they did not : but I would remind your wife, especially, that grief ought no more to be *indulged* than any other of our passions ; though many think, that being inconsolable at the loss of beloved relatives is amiable, who would be shocked at the idea of indulging many other passions. Every thing in our nature wants regulating, moderating, and subordinating to the will of God ; and natural affection as well as the rest. Several particulars, in which faith and submission to God greatly consist on earth, will have no place in heaven. Of this kind is patience under sharp afflictions. This is very honourable to God, edifying to our brethren, and profitable to ourselves : but without sharp affliction we should have no opportunity of exercising it. This is, then, an opportunity given you of experiencing and manifesting the power and excellency of your principles ; which may eventually be of great importance in various ways.—In reading of our Lord’s miracles, the reflection often occurs to me, would not those who endured the sharpest sorrows, (Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, for instance,) with the full view of all the honour to Christ, and all the

good to mankind, which arose, and still arises, and shall for ever arise, from their exquisite anguish of heart; have been willing to go through the whole again, if again such vast advantage might result from it? At least, they would not on any account have escaped suffering what they did, now that they see all the reasons why they suffered. Yet, at the time, they had no idea of the ends to be answered by their distresses: and the same wisdom and love order our troubles, both as to the nature and the result of them, which ordered theirs. *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*—*All these things are against me!* But what does Jacob now think of these transactions?

“ All this, however, you know, and, I trust, remember.—I would also hint, that you should be careful not too much to indulge the fond remembrance of endearing circumstances; for this feeds a kind and degree of grief, not consistent with submission to the will of God.—If I may judge by myself, you will find this dispensation, in the event, greatly subservient in helping you to realize an unseen world, and in exciting earnestness in prayer. As a minister, you will often have occasion to counsel and comfort others in similar circumstances; and you will do this both with more feeling, and more influence, as having experienced the painful trial yourself. Perhaps many trials are allotted us on this very account: (2 Cor. i. 4—6:) and this suggests an important plea, in prayer, for wisdom and grace to bear and improve the trial in a proper manner.—We are apt to say of this or the other creature,

*This same shall comfort us:* and thus the gifts of our God insensibly draw our hearts from him; and then it becomes necessary, almost, for him to *wither our gourds*. He does so in love; and we shall know, at length, that we have cause to be thankful.—When I think of the manner in which Aaron lost his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, (Lev. x.) and David his, Amnon and Absalom; and of many other instances of this kind; I am ready to say, How light, comparatively, would the trial have been, had they lost them when infants! And yet they would have felt, in that case, the same things that you now do.

“I have written a great deal, of what, in some cases, might be called common place; and, not being very well, I seem to have little energy in writing: but, in affliction, a hint suggested to memory is often welcome and useful. I shall only add that, if Frances should give way to grief, so as not to take proper care of her health, she would show love where it must be useless, and fail in it where it may be essentially beneficial; as well as in submission to God.—I write on the supposition that the dear child either is gone, or will not recover: but perhaps the Lord may have heard prayer for her recovery.”

Some other short extracts may show the warmth of his affection not only to his grandchildren, who were the immediate objects of them, but towards some whom he had long since lost, but never ceased to remember with tenderness.

“July 28, 1805. I feel for my poor dear Jane,



who, I suppose, hardly remembers me : but her *name*," (she was called after her grandmother,) " and every thing, makes me feel tenderly for her."

" January 11, 1807. As I am rather dry in my manner, I do not know whether you were aware, how much —— was my favourite, when I was at Hull. The account of her sickness and suffering, and all respecting her, affected me more than you would probably suppose : and the thoughts of my ever dear Anne came into my mind, with a force that I have not felt for some years.—Well, I began to be comforted under the idea, that, if poor —— should be taken from you and us, the Lord would prepare her, or was preparing her, for a happier world. But other things followed which more deeply affected me. However, after all, I hope that God will hear prayer, and spare the dear child ; and spare her for good ; and overrule the whole for good to you all, old and young. I am sure our prayers are not wanting."

Writing from London to Aston, April 22, 1806, he says : " O home, how I love thee ! because I love those at home. If my prayers are answered, and ——, and ——, and ——, and ——, &c. &c. will be very happy, and great blessings."

When the distance, to which some of us were removed from him, was complained of, he wrote as follows.

" I am sure I regret as much as you can do, the distance at which we are placed ; yet we must not let this consideration have undue weight. I do love to be with my children, and to have them about me : but every one has his place, and ought to have ; and

all our feelings must be submitted to the will of God."

"I endeavour to consider the case of those, whose children are missionaries in distant lands; nay, of those whose children, from worldly motives, are far removed from them. Each seem to think, that if their beloved relatives are doing well, though far off, all is well. We must be the *salt* and *light* of the world, and be scattered for that purpose. Let us then submit to God, and give the more diligence that we may meet in heaven *with exceeding joy*. St. Paul *greatly desired to see Timothy, being mindful of his tears, that he might be filled with joy*: yet, at the call of duty, they must separate. The elders of Ephesus *sorrowed most of all that they must see his face no more*: yet they must part; and, no doubt, after a time, they had a blessed meeting, when their tears were *turned into joy*."

In these extracts he speaks for himself: in the following another speaks of him.

"June 12, 1809. Yesterday your dear father preached two capital sermons on Psalm cxix. 32. and Mark x. 13, 14; the last of which was on the occasion of T. H. having his two youngest children baptized. I think I hardly ever heard him so eloquent and pathetic. Among other things, he mentioned his own children and grandchildren, with tears in his eyes, in such a manner as brought, I believe, tears into the eyes of several others. The picture he drew of Christ, 'lifting up his holy hands, and blessing the young children,' would really have been a fine subject for a painter."

To his friend in Northumberland he again wrote November 20, 1808.

“ Dear Mrs. R———, If I had not a most clear and full excuse, my conduct in not writing to you would be exceedingly blamable: but I am so engaged with my publications, with letters of business thus rendered unavoidable, with instructing missionaries placed under my care, and with my ministerial employments; that I am compelled to decline all correspondence which is not absolutely necessary. It must also be remembered that I am growing old, (almost sixty-two,) and never was very healthy: and I can assure you that I am weary every night at bed time, as much as any poor labourer. Yet, bless God, my health is not much worse than when you were with me, bating infirmities of old age: and I go on preaching as often, as long, and as loud, perhaps, as formerly, and with great encouragement in this obscure place.

“ I wish I was like St. Paul who could say, *always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy*: but I hope I do not quite forget you and your's. I feel gratified by your letter; it calls to my mind, what always refreshes it, the scenes which took place when you were with us: and I hope and trust that he who, (as I then most confidently believed, and still do,) *began a good work in you, will perform it till the day of Christ*. I am rejoiced to hear that any of your children are walking in the Lord's ways: and I would encourage your hope of the others. Only give them good instructions; exercise parental authority with firmness, as well as kindness, by reproofs and corrections when necessary; set before

them sedulously an edifying example ; and pray for them continually and fervently : then wait, and hope, and acquiesce in the will of God ; and even those who now seem less promising will perhaps become your comfort. What you mention of your sister is also very pleasant to me ; and, were it practicable, I should be glad to see and converse with you both : but I suppose we shall not meet, till we meet, as I hope, in heaven.

“ I would not, however, discourage your writing. I am drawing near the close of my work, on which I have spent ten years : and after that, I may be more at liberty to answer your letters. At present, I must conclude. Mrs. S. and my daughter are well, (or as well as usual,) and unite in respects and good wishes. May the almighty God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, shower down all blessings, especially spiritual blessings, abundantly, on you, your husband, your children, your *brother*, &c. : this is the sincere prayer of your faithful friend and servant in Christ,

THOMAS SCOTT.”

In October 1809, my father lost his esteemed friend and patron, Mr. Barber. I have great pleasure in being allowed to insert his letter to Mrs. Barber on this occasion, both for its own excellence ; from the regard justly due to the family ; and because of the happy impression which it appears to have made on the minds of those immediately concerned in it. The reader, I persuade myself, would wish to see it entire, though it may repeat some thoughts contained in a letter recently introduced.

“ October 8, 1809. My dear madam, The event

made known to me by Mr. R——'s letter, though melancholy, was by no means unexpected. In general, I am reluctant to intrude on mourners during the first paroxysms of grief: but I feel such a special interest in you, and all your concerns, that I cannot delay to express how sincerely I sympathize with you. I know you *must* grieve, both for your own heavy loss, and for that of your dear children, and of many others. I would only wish to drop a hint or two towards alleviating and regulating your sorrows, that you may *not grieve, as one without hope*, for him who, I trust, *sleeps in Jesus*.—While the excellency of the husband and father, of whom you and your children have been bereaved, enhances the greatness of your loss, it infuses the sweetest ingredients into the bitter cup. You have no call to lament, as David over wicked Absalom, and many a parent, or wife, or child, over one, concerning whom there is *no hope*, or scarcely any, as to the infinite concerns of eternity. You have ground for rejoicing amidst your tears: your loss is the immense gain of him, whom you most love: and surely, would a wish or prayer do it, you would not bring him back into this sorrowful world—especially in the afflicted state, in which he had long continued. You will meet again, to part no more: and many blessings are in store for you and your's, in answer to the prayers he had long offered for you.

“ Your dearest earthly friend is taken away: but *the Lord liveth* from everlasting to everlasting. The event, which you must deplore, (nature dictates, and reason and revelation sanction your doing so,) is, beyond all doubt, the result of wise love to you, as

certainly as Joseph's being sold into Egypt was the result of wise love to Jacob and his family. *What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.* I am of opinion that, if the greatest sufferer, among those who have been eventually saved, could have known all the good effects of his sufferings, to himself and others, and the glory redounding to God by means of them; he would have willingly and thankfully received his bitterest cup; even as Jesus, *for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross.* I can conceive of Bartimeus, in heaven, blessing God for his blindness; Martha and Mary, for the death of Lazarus; Lazarus, for being called to pass through death twice: and why should you not have to bless God for this present painful dispensation? *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.*—Your good sense, and your acquaintance with the scriptures, cannot fail of suggesting to you, that *indulging grief*, however admired in the world, is, in itself, as wrong as indulging anger, or any other passion. You cannot but grieve enough, without *feeding* what should be counteracted. *While the child lived, I fasted and wept, &c.* 2 Samuel xii. 19—23. The will of God is *now known*: though painful, you must feel it right to submit, and to say, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*: and, however great the loss, the all-sufficient God can make it up.

“ I am far from regretting, or thinking it an addition to your sorrow, that you are left with seven children. Under God, they will be an alleviation of it. *Leave thy fatherless children with me, I will*

*preserve them alive ; and let thy widows trust in me.*

—My dear friend, a most important duty, now more important than ever, devolves upon you ; I am fully persuaded, from your past conduct, a duty delightful to you in itself. Now, indeed, for a time the delight will be mingled with tears ; but the importance of the duty is proportionably increased : and I cannot doubt, that the sorrow will decrease, and the joy increase, as you proceed. For the sake of your dear children, in addition to higher motives, watch and pray against excessive sorrow, and against any expressions of it by solitude, or omitting the proper care of your health and spirits ; which might unfit you for your charge. Think thus : ‘ The whole devolves now on me : let me not yield to heartless despondency. The souls of my children, and children’s children, and the welfare of numbers by their means, are now at stake.’

“ Perhaps I have entered too much into detail : but I write as to one of my own children ; and you will excuse me. I trust many here are praying for you and your’s. I cannot but hope, that there are far more than a hundred souls, perhaps two or three hundred, that will bless God for ever, that the living of Aston ever came into your family. I hope many pray heartily to God for support, and comfort, and every blessing on you and your’s. . . . May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus be your support and comforter, and bless you and your children !—Your’s sincerely,  
T. SCOTT.”

It is an additional delightful consideration to me, to think how much the good anticipations of this letter have been already realized.

## IV. Miscellaneous.

“ January 11, 1807. I know not how you have found it, but in many instances I have observed, that things, which at the moment seemed so pertinent and conclusive, that they ought to be said, have afterwards appeared to me far too sharp, and had better have been withheld. I now never write on any thing which involves dispute, (if I can help it,) without laying the letter by a day or two, and then revising it.”

In September 1810, after having visited Olney and the neighbourhood, he wrote from Northampton, on his way to Leicester: “ I found the remnant of my *first crop*, I think, in a far better state than I did last time. . . . The number of old people, whom I remember young and strong is very affecting to me. Six of my friends quite confined to the house: yet all resigned and cheerful. I find also many of the children of my children, and some of their grandchildren, walking in the ways of God, and the cause of true religion is evidently getting ground in the neighbourhood.”

“ April 14, 1811. I like much Mr. ———’s sermon on ———: but nothing of defect is admitted: it is too unqualified praise: it tends to make me despond; and it led me to say, Some persons will ere long tell lies about me also. I admire Mr. Milner’s plan about Mr. Howard: state debtor and creditor. If we have any thing good about us, there is a set off; and it is best that it should be in some measure stated.”

I must confess, that the rule laid down in the closing sentence, unless its restriction be pretty strongly taken, appears to me to impose rather an



awkward task on the preacher of a funeral sermon. To go *much* beyond a general acknowledgment of the imperfection incident to human nature, except in some very particular cases, would seem to be ungracious and unreasonable on such an occasion: and I have sometimes doubted whether scriptural usage requires more. In giving the *history*, in writing the *lives* of good men, scripture certainly relates the faulty as well as the praiseworthy parts of their conduct. Yet, in summing up the *characters* of upright men, even such as had been chargeable with considerable evils, it is remarkable how much it assumes the language of general approbation and praise. And it may be thought, perhaps, that this comes nearer to the case of a funeral sermon, in all such instances as are proper for sermons of that kind.

The following brief observations on books may not be without their use.

“December 2, 1804. By the way, Robertson’s Thesaurus is a most valuable repository of critical and theological matter, to the patient inquirer; bringing together, in one view, every passage where the word in question is used, and quoting the best criticisms upon it.”

“April 7, 1808. I have got Graves’s Lectures on the Pentateuch, and, as far as I have read, am much pleased. I find original remarks; and this is what I want. I am sorry to perceive him so unacquainted with evangelical truth.—Macknight on the Epistles is not of great use. He is a verbose and roundabout writer. I find in him also things *original*: that is, he seems to have known all that the apostle, and his friends, and his enemies, said and did; when there

is not a word on record. He is *wise above what is written*, in the strangest and most positive manner I have ever seen; and on these airy dreams builds systematical expositions quite new to me."

In a letter of June 3, 1807, authorizing me to subscribe for him towards defraying the expense of Mr. Wilberforce's election, in the great contest for Yorkshire, (though he had for some time demurred whether, in the peculiar situation in which he stood, it would be proper for him to do it,) he says: "In every company, I maintain the propriety of Mr. W.'s standing the contest, and of others coming forward to defray the expense. If this be not done, the independence of a large county is, by the very circumstance of its largeness, as effectually given up, as that of a rotten borough. But the cause of Mr. W. is the cause of justice, humanity, and piety, as well as of Britain. I feel a sort of self-congratulation at present, that, above twenty years ago, I withstood, with all my energy, Mr. —'s counsel, who advised Mr. W. to retire from public life. Had that counsel been followed, the slave-trade might have been continued to future generations."

January 20, 1812, he thus speaks of his own memoir of himself. "I am now, as able, employed in drawing up a brief account of the former years of my life, which, for the time, a good deal affects me with the sense of the Lord's goodness, in *leading me when blind*, and most wicked, *by a way that I knew not*. I have written about two sheets, and am come to the eve of my ordination: after which I shall be very brief. I shall leave it with my survivors, to be employed as they see good."

## CHAPTER XV

### FROM THE FINAL DISPOSAL OF HIS COMMENTARY TO HIS LAST ILLNESS.

WHEN my father contracted with the present proprietors of his Commentary, to sell them all the remaining copies, and to convey to them the copyright of the work, it was in the full expectation that he should be enabled to pay off the debts which he had incurred, and to disencumber himself of the embarrassments, under which he had so long laboured, on account of his publications. Thus he expressed himself in announcing the event: "I have been struggling hard for many years, and have now brought matters to that state, that I can dispose of the whole. What I am to receive, with what my bookseller will owe me, will nearly cover all my debts: and it is high time, that, on the one hand, my borrowed money should be paid off, and, on the other, that I should disembarrass myself of worldly cares, and set my house in order, that I may be ready when my summons comes." And, though some delays and disappointments took place, he continued to entertain this expectation, and even to hope that he should be found possessed of some moderate portion of property, till the latter end of the year 1813. But, at that period, on winding up his accounts, he found, to his

utter astonishment, and with a greater degree of disquietude, than he had, perhaps, ever before felt on such a subject, that he was still deficient more than 1200*l.* which he had little else to defray, than printed paper, which appeared to be almost unsaleable. This was principally owing to great quantities of his books, especially the works in five volumes, being now discovered in the printer's warehouses, and brought to account, which were before considered as sold. He mentions in a letter that eight hundred and six volumes were thus brought forward in one article. This was not only a grievous disappointment, as presenting him with apparently useless paper, instead of ready money, but as it, in great measure, frustrated his hopes for the future. He had calculated that his minor works were selling to the amount of 250*l.* or 300*l.* annually; but it now appeared that the sale was not exceeding 100*l.* a year; which made a material difference in the prospect before him.

This discovery exceedingly disconcerted and distressed him, especially as he charged himself with actual, though unconscious injustice, in disposing, in various ways, on the ground of the erroneous calculation of his property, of sums, which now turned out not to be his own: and, amidst increasing infirmities and disabilities, he began to forebode dying insolvent, and thus, perhaps, leaving a stigma upon his character and profession.

Under these painful impressions he wrote to the different branches of his family in November, 1813. "I sit down, to write to you on a painful subject, and, perhaps, with a heavier heart than I ever did before." "To my utter astonishment and overwhelm-

ing almost, I find that I am above 350*l. minus* with —,” instead of having some hundred pounds to receive! “Under wrong ideas of being able to afford it, I have been disposing of money, which now, to my great distress, I find was not my own.” “But the most distressing fact is this, that scarcely any thing of my printed paper sells; and, as my whole property, except my furniture, consists of it, I find myself precluded from paying my debts, unless some other methods can be adopted.”—And again, “My state of health also, and the improbability of my teaching the missionaries much longer, or doing without a curate, compared with the scantiness of my income, apart from my debts, is trying to faith and patience; especially as, I believe, my friends in general think me well provided for, and therefore give me no help.” “Except I can look to God, my prospect is dreary: my infirm health also concurs in depressing my spirits.—But, though sometimes disheartened, I rise again above it.”

It may be observed that the letters, from which these extracts are taken, were written only two days previously to the very striking one, formerly given, on the instruction of the missionaries. They sufficiently explain the “strong reason” he had “for not at present giving up that service, if he could help it:” though, it will be remembered, he adds, “If however a permanent seminary can be founded, I shall not suffer any personal concern of mine to interfere, and, indeed, shall greatly rejoice in it.”

I have put the reader in possession of this whole case, though it is rather painful to detail it, because, taken in connexion with its issue, I have thought it

due to those, who would endeavour to act upon my father's disinterested and devoted principles, to do so: due also to the religious public, and to several zealous, though some of them unknown friends, who took the most lively interest in his circumstances, as soon as they became acquainted with them: and due, I must add, to the estimation in which, far beyond his own apprehensions, he appeared to be held, "for his work's sake," and for the manner in which he had unreservedly given himself to it.

In these letters my father had observed, that he thought he had "some claim upon the religious public;" and the way in which he proposed to avail himself of it, was merely soliciting his friends, by a private circular, to find him purchasers for his "Theological Works," which he was willing, in this way, to dispose of at a reduced price. "Could I turn three or four hundred copies of the Works into money," he says, "it would set me at liberty." This was accordingly the plan adopted. The printing of this collection of his works, he considered as, "the most imprudent part of his whole concern in that line," and as having "involved him almost inextricably:" but it now proved the means of relieving him effectually, and beyond his most sanguine expectations.

The first person to whom his difficulties, and his proposed means of extricating himself were made known, was the Rev. Charles Simeon, of King's College, Cambridge: and such were the prompt and vigorous exertions of that zealous friend, and excellent man, that, had they been immediately known to my father, they might probably have prevented his issuing his circulars in any other quarter. On Mon-

day, December 20, at a time when his spirits were sunk unusually low, he received from Mr. S. a letter, of which I shall take the liberty of communicating such part as is in my possession.

“ My dear friend, Never was a more delightful office committed to me, than that which I have to execute at this time. Your visit to Cambridge was a blessing to many, who are anxious to testify towards you their respect and love, and who earnestly request your acceptance of a few hundred pounds, which they have desired me to remit you in their name, and in the name of some others who have been benefitted by your writings. The amount I have comprehended in a bill, &c. &c. Greatly rejoicing in an event so expressive of their love to Christ, and the veneration they feel for your character, I am most affectionately yours,

C. SIMEON.”

The remittance comprehended “ 590*l.* a present, besides a considerable sum for books !”

Another near friend, who was on the spot at the time says, “ The interest taken in his concerns by our Cambridge friends, and the delicacy and affection with which the whole business was conducted, will never be forgotten by me.”

But it was not only at Cambridge that the intimation, that my father stood in need of some assistance, was met by so prompt a disposition to afford it : the same was the case in various other places, in some of which he was personally unknown. Bristol, York, and Dublin, deserve particularly to be specified : and in the first of these cities it is no more than is due to mention the name of Isaac Cooke, Esq. The munificent friend of Mr. Cecil showed himself the no

less munificent friend of Mr. Scott, when the occasion called for it, though the latter had “but the slightest acquaintance with him.”

But what was done on this occasion, and in what manner it was received, will be best learned from a few extracts of my father’s letters, written at the time.

To myself he wrote, Dec. 22, 1813: “You will doubtless be astonished at the contents of this letter. The letter which I wrote to Mr. ——, for Mr. Simeon to see, from some circumstances seemed likely to produce me a few subscribers; and I expected little more. . . . Had I received Mr. S.’s letter before I began issuing my circulars, I should have paused; but many were previously sent. I had only one hundred printed. . . . I was low last week; but not so much about my affairs, as that I had written so fully to ——, who, I thought would much censure me; and because I could not, on a review of many past years, but deeply condemn many things in myself. And, when I received Mr. Simeon’s letter, and the bill for so large a sum, I was at first so overwhelmed with shame at my own unbelief and distrust, that I felt lower than ever. But I hope the Lord’s goodness, and the kindness of unexpected friends, will shame us *both*, and *all*, out of distrust and unbelief. I have not been ‘too disinterested,’ &c.”

To his second son, January 17, 1814: “I have received in all from different quarters, and from those of whom I had never heard the name. . . . quite enough to pay all my debts: and, as I have reason to think, that most, if not all, the copies of the works will be disposed of, I now *have all and abound*; except that I want more thankfulness to God and man.



I have even declined some offers made me . . . . . I hope mine will be considered as an *adjudged case*, to encourage faith in God's providence, in those who are employed in his work."

To myself, again, February 17, 1814: "I really expected, at first, little more than to dispose of two or three hundred copies of the works, and I never intimated a desire of further help than in that way. You have heard what I received from Mr. S. . . . . Since then, money has been sent me, with the most cordial respectful letters, from persons of whom I never heard: among the rest, 20*l.* from a quaker. Offers were made of raising more, if I desired it; which I declined. Probably all the copies of the works will be sold. I do not now owe anything which I cannot pay on demand—what I never could say since you were born! and I have something in hand, and shall receive more, besides the works. So you see that, if I have too little regarded such matters while my need was not urgent, when it is how easily the Lord can do more for me, than all my plans could have done in a course of years; and in a manner which tends to make my publications more known and circulated; and, I verily believe, without in any degree deducting from my character. Oh that this may make me ashamed of all my distrust and dejection! and that it may encourage you, and many others, to go on in the work of the Lord, without anxiety on this ground! Serve him *by the day*, and trust him *by the day*: never flinch a service because nothing is paid for it: and when you want it in reality, you or your's, he will pay it. David Brown did much gratis in India: the East India Company

raised a monument for the old bachelor Swartz: but they made provision for Mr. B.'s large family! . . . .

“ Among other things, I received a most friendly letter from Mr. Richardson, inquiring into my circumstances, of which friends at York had received some report. I stated, that *I had all and abounded*, and did not wish to trouble my friends further, except as subscribers to the works. But I, next letter, received 115*l.* as a present!—I have had 350*l.* from Bristol, where I thought my rudeness had given offence; besides orders for a hundred copies of the works!”

Another letter to my brother, ten days afterwards, states that Mr. Cooke had remitted 200*l.* more from Bristol! and my father adds in a postscript,

“ February 25, 1814. I have received at least 2000*l.* as presents in little more than two months, besides the sale of books!! You see how easily God can provide. *Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.* You cannot do a better service to the world, than by bequeathing to it a *well-educated* family. Let this be *your* care, the rest will be the Lord's.”

The letter, above referred to, to the late Mr. Richardson is now before me. It adds nothing, in point of information, to the facts already stated: yet it will furnish an extract or two, which will not be uninteresting. It is dated January 14, 1814, and begins as follows:—“ Your very friendly and pleasing letter found me ill in bed, of a fever, occasioned, I believe, by the severity of the weather. It has confined me a week to my room, and most of the time to my bed; but is, through the mercy of our God, now gone off; though it leaves me extremely

weak. This has no connexion with my local malady, which does not, at present, affect my general health, nor greatly interrupt my labours *at home*, though it makes them much more uneasy and wearying. It seems at a stand: but cure must not be expected . . .

“It is not agreeable to our proud hearts to become, in any way or manner, beggars: but my relief has been sent on such a general hint, and with such soothing tokens of respect and affection, as more than compensate all: and I only want, to crown the whole, a heart deeply and humbly thankful to God, and to those into whose hearts he has put it thus to help me. . .

“Next month I enter my sixty-eighth year: but I have always had a bad constitution, and seldom a year without fevers, (often dangerous;) besides asthma and other complaints: so that I am a wonder to myself.—Suffering and weariness must be my portion here: but I hope that my strength will be equal to my day, my consolation to my tribulation. We shall not meet on earth: but it will not be long, I trust, before we meet in heaven; and then, *face to face, and not by pen and ink, I will speak with thee.*<sup>1</sup> In the mean time, let us pray for each other; let us enter into the spirit of my new year’s text, *Eccles. ix. 10, Whatsoever thy hand, &c.*; and let us bless God, that we leave the state of religion in Britain, and on earth, more promising than we found it. Praying that this dawn may shine more and more until the glorious day of the millennium, I am your faithful friend and brother,

THOS. SCOTT.”

Referring to the same illness spoken of in this letter, my sister says, February 21, “I had a perilous

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Richardson died one month after my father.

journey to Aston during the snow, to see my father in his late illness; but was rewarded by his conversation, which was remarkably animated and interesting."

We now proceed to detail the history of the remaining years of his labours. They will be found, perhaps, more bare of incident than those which preceded them. He was during the whole term a prisoner in the immediate neighbourhood of his home, and almost entirely within his own village. The main point, in addition to giving an account of the productions of his pen, will be to display the temper of his mind, and the spirit by which he was actuated; which acquire an increasing interest as we approach his latter end, and see them still sustained, or rather raised yet higher, amidst daily accumulating infirmities.

In the early part of the year 1814, we find him turning his attention, and with all his wonted vigour, to a subject which was in a great measure new to him, the question between Jews and Christians. This was in consequence, as he tells us in the preface to the work which he afterwards published upon it, of a copy of Rabbi Crooll's "Restoration of Israel," being forwarded to him by the Committee of the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, "with a request that he would answer it." He understood "the same to have been done to a few other persons;" and, "being fully engaged at the time," he, after looking slightly into the book, laid it aside, feeling "not at all inclined to undertake the service." "But being somewhat less engaged, at the beginning of the following year," (1814,) "he again took up the copy

and read it more attentively ; purposing, if not too late, to make some short remarks on particular passages, and communicate them to any one, who, he should learn, was preparing an answer. In attempting this, however, the whole concern appeared to him in a new light ; and he perceived, that, by this work an opening was given to the zealous friends of Christianity, and cordial friends of the Jews, to bring the whole subject in controversy, between Christians and Jews, before the public and the nation of Israel." The consequence was the production within the year, of an octavo volume, containing Crooll's work, and an answer to it, in which all the principal points at issue are discussed.

Some observations relative to this work may deserve to be extracted from his correspondence while employed upon it.

" February 14, 1814. I am deeply engaged in the controversy between Jews and Christians, and in answering a book by R. Crooll, Hebrew teacher at Cambridge. It is my object to draw forth the Jews from their lurking holes to fair argument : and I mean to discuss every important question concerning the Messiah of the Old Testament, on the ground of the Old Testament only. I think I shall bring forth much original matter on many topics. I shall at least furnish materials to future workmen.—I have in contemplation also to condense the remarks on the ' Refutation of Calvinism ' into one volume, stating the argument briefly, without extraneous matter."

This was at a time when he had been confined " five Sundays from church, three by sickness, and

two by the weather." "Nothing like this winter," he remarks, "has occurred for almost fifty years."

April 7, he writes, "I think I know the general plan or idea of Limborch, respecting the Jews; that the more offensive peculiarities of Christianity are to be kept out of sight, and the grand question, of Jesus being the Messiah, first considered. I thought somewhat in the same way once: but the peculiarities of Christianity are evidently the grand objections of modern Jews. Their *Socinianism*, so to speak, is prominent in all their objections; and it is vain to discuss previous questions: the whole must be proved from the Old Testament, or nothing is done. But they are so uninformed, that every argument or statement will be new to them, if it be possible to get them to read, and consider, and try to answer. This I am attempting, with all the gentleness and benevolence I can: and I get new light myself, on every topic."

"June 27, 1814. I have completed, nearly ready for the press, my book respecting the Jews. It must be original to many readers, for a great part of it is so to me: and I have, in many things, almost new views of the doctrine of the Old Testament in these respects.—The contrast between the triumphs of Jesus, and those of Mohammed, is, in my own view, very striking.—I should hope the whole would be rather conciliatory to the Jews: as it ascribes to them a precedency of honour and love, at their restoration, beyond what has been hitherto brought forward."

Though, however, this work, certainly one of no little labour and thought, was thus nearly completed

by the middle of the year in which it was begun, the preface is not dated till October; and, owing to delays after the manuscript had left the author's hand, it was not published till near midsummer in the ensuing year.

At this period I find the following brief notice of his state in a letter from his daughter, then settled in his immediate neighbourhood.

“ June 3, 1814. It is indeed a source of unspeakable satisfaction to us, that we are situated so near my dear father, and can have so frequently the pleasure of seeing and hearing him. May we but derive all the advantage, which his instructions and example are so calculated to afford! The calmness and cheerfulness, with which he supports the almost constant pain and weariness he suffers, are truly edifying; and the vigour and activity of his mind render his conversation as interesting as ever it was.”

This year was marked by the fall of Bonaparte, and the restoration of peace with France. The general joy and exultation were, however, most painfully damped, in the breasts of all the zealous friends of humanity and of mankind, by that clause in the treaty of peace which sanctioned the continuance, or rather the revival, of the African slave trade, for the period of five years; at the same time that it pronounced it a traffic “ repugnant to the principles of natural justice.” Along with others, my father, for a time, felt his full share of disappointment and sadness on the occasion. This continued till the very day of the general thanksgiving, (July 7,) when it found a degree of unexpected relief. He thus describes his feelings in the preface to the sermon which he

preached, and published under the title of ‘Light shining out of Darkness:’ “I entered on the preparation for the day with unusual dejection, as consciously unable to meet the case with adequate encouragements to others, or myself to emerge out of most disheartening regret: so that I looked forward to the service with very painful anticipations. But, while thus meditating on the subject, brighter views unexpectedly arose in my mind. These views I endeavoured to set before my congregation, without the most remote idea of publishing them: yet, on subsequent reflection, they appeared to me, and some others, so new, and so animating, on a most gloomy topic, that I was led to print them.”

It happened that, before I received any intelligence of this sermon, I had the opportunity of ascertaining, and communicating to my father, the views taken of the same subject by the late excellent Dr. Buchanan. He too, like one well practised in waiting for a desired object, and in regarding apparent disappointment as one preparative for its accomplishment, was looking for “light out of darkness;” and the sentiments which I found him entertaining, remarkably corresponded with those at which my father had arrived. From what quarter “light” was to break in they little anticipated: and, had they anticipated it, that too would have been a source of further alarm and distressing feelings. It was only through the return of the despot, who had so long made Europe to tremble, and by means of the fresh negotiations which followed his final expulsion, that “the high contracting powers,” were brought “each to prohibit, without restriction, their colonies and subjects from



taking any part whatever in this traffic." Would to God that the time might arrive, when the proscription thus announced shall actually take effect; and when cupidity on the one hand, and lukewarmness on the other, shall no longer set at nought the claims of humanity, and the injunctions of our holy religion; and conspire to frustrate the enactments of legislatures, and the solemn covenants of nations!

At this period I visited Aston, and, in returning, saw the other branches of the family. On my letter to my father, after my arrival at home, he remarks, "Your letter gave me much pleasure—which I do not very generally experience, for want of a right state of heart. Our mercies and blessings, as a family, and as individuals, are great and many: but our *feelings* at the present, either of pain, or of disappointment in smaller concerns, too often render us forgetful of them."

It is natural that a closing chapter, in the history of a long life, should have to report the deaths of not a few of the friends of him who is the subject of it: and, alas! events of this kind will be found pretty thickly interspersed in the period we are considering.

In October of this year my father lost his youngest sister, Mrs. Burgess, of Leicester, and to her daughter, (herself since deceased,) whom he did not consider as at that time living under the power of religion, he wrote in the following faithful and affectionate manner, when she announced the event to him.

"I was just thinking of setting apart a little time for answering your former letter, when I received your last, stating, what indeed I had expected to hear, the

decease of your dear mother. Thus the younger is first removed! So uncertain is life, and so it pleases God to derange all our calculations, even as to the *probability* of its continuance! My brother, who is thirteen, and my sister, who is four years older than I am, and I myself, still survive; and your mother, who was nine years younger, is gone! May we be ready also, for at what time the hour cometh we know not, and cannot know.

“ I was glad to hear from Mr. V—— that he visited your mother in her illness; and for what he said concerning the state of her mind. As for me, I could only pray for her; which I trust I did heartily, more than once every day, from the time I heard of her sickness; and that God would sanctify the afflictive dispensation for good to all the family; and now also, that God may be your supporter and comforter.—In respect of yourself, I would remind you of the question asked by the Lord in Jeremiah, *Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, be thou the guide of my youth?* (Jer. iii. 4.) It would not be seasonable to enter into particulars on this melancholy occasion; lest I should seem to speak *to the grief of those whom God hath wounded*. But you must be conscious, that a radical and entire change is needful, in order to your participating in *the joy of God's salvation*; at least, you must be aware, that this is my judgment, from what I have hitherto observed and heard.

“ Your favoured situation at Leicester, and the opportunities which you have formerly had of hearing my dear departed friend and brother Mr. Robinson, *whose praise is in all the churches*; as well as your

present advantages; preclude the necessity of my entering into particulars, as your former letter seemed to intimate a desire of my doing. But if, aware of that plainness of speech which I am accustomed to use on such infinitely important topics, though, I trust, connected with tender sympathy and affection, you should still desire me to write to you on the subject, and point out any special questions on which you wish for my opinion; notwithstanding my infirmities and engagements, I will endeavour to answer you: and if any book of mine, which you have not, would be acceptable to you or your father, send me word and I will order it.

“ But I believe the whole in your case may nearly be summed up in the exhortation, to listen patiently and attentively to your own conscience; to reverence it; and to remember that, by acting contrary to it in any degree or instance, or endeavouring to suppress its dictates, you *quench* the Spirit of God, and provoke him to leave you. I cannot but think, you know enough of the great outlines of evangelical religion, and are so far convinced of the truth of it, that, in following the dictates of your conscience, you would be led to separate from the vanities of a vain world; *to repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance*; to come to Christ, sit at his feet with Mary, hear his word with obedient faith, and make his commandments the rule, and his example the pattern, of your future conduct. This alone is the way of peace and happiness: this alone can prepare you for an earlier death, or prove the way for comfort in declining years, (should you live to that time,) under the infirmities of age, and the

near prospect of death. All else, however it may glitter in youthful and worldly eyes, is mere tinsel; it is *vanity and vexation of spirit*.

“ I have informed our friends as you desired. The first time for above a twelvemonth, I have left home, and ridden over to Stone, where your cousin King lives, about five miles from Aston. . . . We all unite in condolence, and kind remembrance to your father and the rest of the family; and in prayer for you all. I remain your affectionate uncle,

THOMAS SCOTT.”

This correspondence with his niece continued, and produced some letters which may hereafter be introduced. He says to her, Dec. 13, 1814, “ It is very true that I can spare little time for letter-writing, in the ordinary sense of the word: but, if I could, by any thing which I might write, be an instrument in the hand of God in leading you into the paths of peace and salvation, it would fall in with the object of all my occupation—*the ministry of reconciliation—beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God.*”

In January following occurred a death which might justly be accounted a public, as well as private loss—that of my father’s highly esteemed friend and benefactor, Mr. Henry Thornton. About a year before that event, after a considerable interruption of their intercourse, he had received a letter from Mr. T., just in the midst of his disquietude at the discovery he had made of the state of his pecuniary affairs, which was highly cheering to his mind. It breathed united kindness and piety. “ I have heard lately,” said the writer, “ one or two very unfavourable accounts of your health, and I cannot resist my

inclination to assure you, though from this desk of worldly business, how much I sympathize with you in those temporal sorrows, which I doubt not are working out for you, as you have been used so often to say to others, *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*.—Having in more early life been an attendant on your ministry, I cannot at this later period be forgetful of my obligations to you; and, though I may have assisted you in some degree in what may partly be called your carnal things, I mean in what concerned the printing of your Commentary on the Bible, I still feel myself on the whole your debtor; since my advantages, like those, I trust, of many others, are not capable of being estimated at any pecuniary price.”—My father had just been preaching from the passage of scripture alluded to by Mr. T., (2 Cor. iv. 16—18,) when on his return home he found this letter, and in it a real cordial, such as he wanted. He considered it as confirming the intimation he had formerly received from Mr. T.’s father, that his ministry had been blessed as the means of first giving a decidedly religious turn to Mr. H. T.’s mind. Independently, therefore, of the kindness which it breathed, and the “dawn of light” which it cast upon the “gloom” that had surrounded him, it could not but afford him the highest gratification to think of having contributed, in any degree, to the formation of such a character as HENRY THORNTON; and much more to have been made instrumental (as he hoped,) in infusing that principle, which was the firm basis of all his sterling virtues.—Proportioned, accordingly, to the regard which he bore to Mr. H. T., was my father’s regret for his

loss, when he was removed from the world by a death, so premature to all but himself. His notice of it in a letter, written a few days after, is brief, but touching; and at the same time worthy of the writer. "I cannot express," he says, "how much the death of Mr. H. Thornton affects me; even as the death of some near relation. I feel low and grieved whenever I think of it: but the Lord is wise and faithful. The Lord reward upon his fatherless children all his kindness to me and mine!—As far as either your concerns or mine are implicated, it is a fresh lesson on the admonition, *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils*. When the rushlight in my chamber goes out, it is *dark*; but that darkness leads me to expect the *dawn* and the *sun*. All things will be right at last, if *we* be right. Nothing is of much consequence but eternity."

This prayer for Mr. H. T.'s "fatherless children," (who so soon after became motherless also,) he never ceased to repeat as long as he lived; almost daily alluding to them, though without a name, yet in a manner that was understood, in his family worship.

In the same letter which thus notices the death of Mr. Thornton, he says with reference to a certain periodical publication, since defunct, "I have not seen the new magazine, and probably shall not: but, as far as I can learn, your attempts to check misinterpretations of scripture, in that quarter, will be like the surgeon's attempt to cure the beggar's sore leg, by which he *got his living*."

The next publication, which proceeded from my father's pen, was occasioned by the death of another

highly honoured and dear friend, whom he always considered as one of the most eminent Christians that he had ever known or read of. This was the Right Hon. Lady Mary Fitzgerald. That excellent person lost her life, at nearly ninety years of age, by fire! and my father preached and published, in April, 1815, a sermon on the occasion, in which he gives a very interesting sketch of her character, and the outline of her history. He observes in the preface, that she “was constantly, when in town, and when health would permit, an attendant on his ministry for above seventeen years.” “I was also honoured,” he says, “with what might almost be considered as an intimacy with her. . . . She was very useful in strengthening my hands in my ministry, when concurring circumstances tended greatly to weaken and discourage me: and she has always been ready to aid and concur with me in every plan for attempting usefulness, not only while I was in town, but since I came to this place.” In the body of the discourse, speaking with reference to the same subject, he says: “Many a time, when cares and disquietudes seemed to disqualify my mind, for either receiving or imparting spiritual good, and I called on her, rather from a sense of duty, and to testify respect and gratitude, than from higher motives and expectations; free communication, in discourse with her, has produced such a change, and I have been so sensibly calmed, refreshed, and animated for every work and labour of love, that I could hardly believe myself the same anxious, heartless being, which I had been only just before. Indeed I may say, I scarcely ever experienced such

an effect from any book or sermon, however excellent. And this was the case especially in my last visits to her; when I was led to think, from what I had previously heard, that concurring infirmities precluded much expectation of interesting discourse between us."

The following extracts of letters will show what were his further occupations at this period.

"March 13, 1815. I have sent to the Christian Observer a sheet of translation from Calvin, on the uses of the moral law, which appears to me exceedingly well adapted to meet the perversions of modern Calvinists, as well as to vindicate the author from the ignorant and illiberal abuse generally thrown on him. I have a great idea that extracts from Calvin might be rendered very useful, if circulated at present. I am studying him more than I ever did before; and, in my revisal of the 'Remarks,' (which I am trying to put quite into another form, and not only to condense, but to improve every way,) I now and then make most conclusive quotations from him. I allow the time in the forenoon, after I have taught ——, for this employment, when not interrupted.

"But my main occupation is the Index to the Bible. The partners are so urgent for me to expedite it, that I am forced to give up, or postpone my plans of revision and improvement of the Commentary, which I was carrying on, in, I trust, a useful manner. I spend half, or more, of my *working* time (which is nearly all, except *sleeping* time,) about it. I find it a difficult and cumbrous business: and yet I think the Index itself will throw much light on the scriptures, and on the comment. I must begin very soon



to print; and, when I am preparing copy for the press, I hope God will aid me to simplify the business, more than I can do in the rough draft.

“ Thomas’s Sermon and Memoir of Mr. West give an idea of sterling excellence *sui generis*, which is suited to put most affluent professors of the gospel on thinking, What do I? or, What might I do? ”

The last paragraph refers to my brother’s little publication on the death of the founder of Gawcott Chapel, which was before mentioned. Of the index to the Commentary, which afterwards partook also of the character of a Concordance to the sacred text, and was finally relinquished for more urgent, perhaps more important employment, we shall have further occasion to speak as we proceed.

“ May 16, 1815. I have had some measure of fever, and, though I have not been laid by, I have been rendered less capable of extra-exertion than usual. I have written and published a funeral sermon on dear Lady Mary Fitzgerald. . . . I have also been forming an index to my answer to Crool, which is just coming out. . . .

“ You will have heard that Mr. Fuller is dead. This will be a great loss to the Baptist Mission especially: but it is so firmly fixed, that it is not likely to be easily shaken. A little less eagerness about adult baptism, in a secretary, would compensate something.—So one goes, and another, younger than I, and I go on preaching and writing! I have written a long letter, which is printing in an Irish pamphlet, respecting our church, &c.; in which I am sure I shall not satisfy the bigots on any side; but which, I flatter myself, may do some good. The pamphlet

is entitled, ‘The Evil of Separation from the Established Church, in a Series of Letters to the Rev. Peter Roe, Kilkenny.’ I had no hand in the title, or in any thing but the introductory letter.

“I think more good is going on in this neighbourhood than there was, and fresh persons come, in place of that large proportion of the old congregation which has left us: so that our company is not much smaller. I go on with my routine of services, as usual, but am extremely weary; yet not materially worse afterwards.”

About two years afterwards, the pamphlet, here referred to, was reprinted in London: and, on that occasion, my father added a second letter, with an appendage, of which he speaks as follows:—

“In revising my papers which Mr. Roe published, I have been led to write a Treatise on the religion of Israel, as an establishment, and have been drawn on to extend it to some sheets. It is, I think, quite original, and gives a view of the whole subject, entirely different from what I ever read or conceived before I began, and highly favourable to establishments *in general*.”

The mention which occurs of the changes in his congregation may give occasion here to introduce the following excellent remarks from a letter, written, at a somewhat earlier period, to a gentleman then resident at Cambridge, but since very usefully employed in the ministry; who, at the instance of a clerical friend, consulted him on the best means of obviating such fluctuations, and on the subject of preaching non-essential doctrines, against which the majority of the hearers are prejudiced.

“March 7, 1814. I am much obliged to you for

your kind inquiries after my health, and to all my friends who pray for me in this respect : but I especially need and value prayer for me, that I may be carried through the last stage of my pilgrimage, in a manner which may adorn and honour the gospel of God our Saviour. . . . I am enabled to spend almost as much time in my studies, and with my pen, as heretofore ; and to officiate in my little church as formerly. Indeed I wish I were as well able in mind, as in body, to answer the inquiry which you so reluctantly propose to me : but this is by no means the case. All my experience, and observation, and study, wholly fail to teach me how to keep together a congregation, which is prejudiced against some part of that instruction, which faithfulness renders it my duty to inculcate. It seems to me as hopeless, as to give the farmer counsel how he may use his fan, and yet not lessen the heap of corn and chaff on his barnfloor. Even in respect of opinions about adult baptism introduced lately in my little congregation, all the plans which I have devised, seem wholly to fail, in respect of keeping together even those who received their first religious impressions under my ministry. I have prayed much respecting it, and varied my plans : but yet my people continue to leave me ; especially the newly awakened, who, I fear, go to be lulled asleep again by immersion,<sup>1</sup> and joining a baptist congregation in the next village. . . .

“ In all cases, as far as my experience and observation reach, they, who have received partial religious instruction, and, as it were, *made up their minds to it*, will hear a new minister so long as he tells them

<sup>1</sup> Viz. by resting in the external change and profession.

what they *already know or believe*. This is the standard by which they try his doctrine: but if he attempts to rectify their errors, however manifest, and with whatever ability and candour he does it; or to instruct their ignorance, however palpable; they will take offence, and probably forsake his ministry; accusing him of some deviation from sound doctrine, as their reason for so doing. Yet, without their errors be rectified, or their deficiencies supplied, or their characters improved, their attendance is wholly in vain. . . .

“ A niece of mine, now married to a missionary in Africa, used to say, that I preached *straight forward*: and thus I would advise your friend to do; to preach *straight forward*, declaring what he deems the truth of God, simply and plainly; but not turning aside to argue against any who dissent from it, except in matters of superior importance and clearness.

“ He should, however, endeavour *to proportion* his doctrine to the scriptural measure; and not to have more Calvinism, properly so called, in his sermons, in proportion to other instructions, than is found in the New Testament. Some Calvinists put as much into a sermon as the whole of St. Paul’s epistles contain, but far less of other things. Mr. Newton used to say, that Calvinism should be, in our general religious instructions, like a lump of sugar in a cup of tea; all should taste of it, but it should not be met with in a separate form.—I think I could preach all, which is essential to my Calvinism, even to *pious* Wesleyans, for a short time, and almost win their assent: but not all Methodists are pious and humble; the *hearts*, as well as the *heads*, of some are Arminian:

these are, and will be, spies : they will discern the deviation, if not by *seeing*, yet by *feeling* ; and will alarm their more humble brethren.—Yet still individuals will get good ; and others will be brought forth ; and, when we have done what we can, we must leave the rest to God in prayer.”

With this may be connected a short extract from a letter to his youngest son, written at the period at which we have arrived.

“ October 23, 1815. I suppose no man ever entered on a new sphere, with your views of what man ought to be, without finding more and more, that those among whom he laboured were further from that standard than he at first supposed. Human wickedness and human misery always appear greater on investigation than on a superficial view. But to be the honoured instrument of doing even a little good in this mischievous, miserable, deluded, ungodly world, is a singular mercy and privilege : and the more diseased your neighbours are, the more is medical help needful. Some, yea many, will die, do all you can : but *take heed to thyself and to the doctrine, for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.* A little good one year, and a little good another year, amounts to *much* good in a course of years. Watch then against dejection. Preach, and pray, and wait, and persevere, and all will be well at last.”

We have already seen him contemplating a new and remodelled edition of his answer to the “ Refutation of Calvinism.” This was one of the works which now employed such time as could be spared for it. He says, January 6, 1816, “ The first book of the

Remarks is finished ; much enlarged and reduced to method, under numerous sections ; several containing entirely new matter. I purpose to leave out all, or most, beyond the fourth book, and to shorten that. I have begun to print ; but I shall go on very slowly." —The parts thus proposed to be omitted were chiefly those which related to the extracts from the Fathers, introduced in the " Refutation."

This year (1816) was a year of many trials to him. At the commencement of it he suffered from fever ; and again so severely, in the month of April, that he fully anticipated its fatal termination. The life also of his second son was brought into the most imminent peril by sudden and very distressing illness ; while his youngest son was obliged to relinquish a situation, in which he had hoped for much usefulness, by the great profligacy and even threatening behaviour of a manufacturing population, which rendered it improper to retain a family among them. Certain calamitous events also in collateral branches of the family greatly afflicted him ; as did the painful intelligence of the deaths of missionaries in Africa, who had been trained by him, and from whose labours he looked for important results. These, and other circumstances, gave occasion to certain expressions in some further extracts which I shall present from his letters.

The following hints on the subject of temptations arising chiefly from the deep and mysterious dealings of God with the human race ; and likewise on that of anxiety concerning the spiritual interests and future state of our children ; will not be uninteresting to those who have experienced the feelings referred to.

" March 4, 1816. I have of late received so

many letters of painful intelligence, that they have almost been to me like the messengers, who followed one another with evil tidings to Job; though, I bless God, far from so distressing; yet, in my shattered frame and spirits, rather more than I could well support. . . .

“ I have, for many years, when assailed by harassing mental temptations, taken occasion from them to leave, as it were, my own personal concerns, and to enlarge especially, after, or even during their prevalence, in supplications for the extension of the kingdom of Christ, and for the subversion of that of Satan; subjoining a sort of earnest request, to be enabled to be revenged on these enemies, by more vigorous and successful efforts in the cause of God. . . . Temptations follow tempers; and Satan has awfully prevailed against some persons of a reasoning turn of mind.—Such things used to harass me much more than they do at present. I would hope because I take a better method of getting deliverance from them. . . . In general I consider them as temptations to *unbelief, contrary to the fullest proof conceivable*; the remains of the scepticism of our hearts, wrought upon by satanical influence, as the waves of the sea are by the wind; and to be overcome only by *the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*—THUS IT IS WRITTEN; and by earnest prayer, *Πρόσθεε μοι πίστιν, Increase my faith! Help mine unbelief!* . . . I every day find cause to bless God for protection from the assaults of these enemies in this respect; of which I formerly had dire experience. *O make strong thine hedge about me!* (Job i. 10.)”

On the case of these “reasoning persons,” he says, in explanation, March 19, “Not one of them, that I have heard and known of, seems to have received the *love* of the truth, as well as the *knowledge* of the truth; (2 Thess. ii. 10. Heb. x. 26:)—a distinction which appears to me of great importance. A want of simplicity, humility, and gravity, has likewise been observable in them, by all competent judges, even while brilliant talents excited the admiration of pious persons in general.”

With reference to the same subject he says, June 25, “I remember that, just before I entered on my exposition of the book of Job, I was much more exercised with such temptations, arising from the awful truths of scripture, and dispensations of God, than at any time before or since: and I have long thought, that this was permitted, among other things, in order to give me more realizing views of that awful subject, the power and agency of evil spirits, than I before had; and that it proved very useful to me in explaining that part of scripture.”

“March 14, 1816. Human nature verges to extremes: it is the pendulum, vibrating to and fro, and never stationary *in medio*. Yet truth and duty generally lie *in medio*. The want of solicitude about the salvation of their children, and undue solicitude about accomplishments, preferment, and worldly advantages, which are prominent in most parents, even professors of the gospel, nay ministers, have been and are a most lamentable evil, and a grievous sign of our times. But, while this is watched and prayed against, we should be careful not to run into any extreme which implies distrust of God, or want



of submission to his holy and sovereign will, who doeth what he pleases, but always does what is right ; and what all his friends will know to be right at last, and ought to believe to be so now. . . . I am of opinion, that few thus trained up (in a consistent Christian manner,) live and die unconverted. . . . In general, the Lord's method is, I think, first, to bring down our wills into submission, unreserved submission ; and then to grant the thing longed for : and the sweetness of unreserved submission, after many conflicts with unbelief and a rebellious will, has been greater than almost any I ever felt, in having the desires of my heart granted me. This was the final result of my long protracted rebellion against the doctrine of gratuitous election. I shall not forget the sweetness of saying, for substance, *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight !*"

On recovering from the fever under which he suffered in the spring, he thus wrote to his correspondent in Northumberland.

" May 9, 1816. I am quite a prisoner in this place ; but can reach the church, and preach nearly as usual. I can also write, and read, and study, many hours in a day ; but am always uneasy and weary. My sight, however, and my faculties seem unimpaired ; though I hear badly, walk clumsily and with pain, and do not suppose I shall ever try to ride more. I have, however, numerous and most valuable mercies, and only need a more holy and thankful heart. I am now in my seventieth year ; and have outlived almost all who were my contemporaries, and many of my juniors, in the ministry. . . . All my care and prayers about my own children in

this respect (their conversion) are transferred to my sixteen grandchildren. . . I desire, and, I trust, shall not in vain desire, the help of your prayers, both for them and myself, that I may *close well*. . . . It might be expected that I should write to each of them, and talk particularly to them, when I see them, in the way you wish me to write to your children : but I either never had the proper talent for this kind of service, or I have quite lost it. I pray for them, and say a few things to such as come to see me ; and they seem very much attached to me : but I seem ashamed that I feel no liberty of being more explicit with them. I trust, however, their parents supply my lack of service. I seem to have lost my talent of prattling with children, just as I have my adroitness in *nursing*. You must, in this respect, tell your children what you think I would say or write to them. I will send you a few of my later publications, . . . and, if you meet with aught too Calvinistic, you must *skip it*."

The closing sentence will not pass unnoticed : " If you meet with aught too Calvinistic, you must skip it." As coming from so *inveterate a Calvinist*, it may deserve to be again referred to ; as may also one or two other things which have come before us. They may show, where persons of my father's sentiments really lay the stress, privately as well as in public.

To myself he wrote at this period : " As I am now in my seventieth year, it might not be amiss to come with part of your family each year, as long as I shall be with you. My prayers might be quickened and encouraged at least, which is almost all in my power :

and, as my staying at home saves expense, I might contribute to that of your journey.”

As my object is, to display fully the spirit of him concerning whom I write, I make no apology for such familiar extracts: and I apply the same remark to that which follows from a letter of my sister's.

“ May 22, 1816. I think we should break through almost any inconveniences for the benefit and pleasure of our dear father's company. Alas! we must not expect this high privilege long. Let us enjoy and improve it, while we possess it! He preached a most affecting sermon on Thursday from, *I am in a strait betwixt two, &c.* The description of heavenly happiness was, I think, superior to any thing I ever heard or read: and at the same time he made life appear more desirable than I ever before felt it.—I must own I was disposed, like you, to be very averse to a new pupil at Aston; but his coming was entirely my father's own proposal. He wished it so much, that neither my mother nor myself could oppose it.”

Hence it appears, that, though my father had for some time been relieved from the care of the missionary students, he had not quite given up the labour of preparing young men for the church. On the subject of this additional pupil he says, “ My new pupil does not *teaze* me; for I am competent to teach him. My old one teazes me more, for I cannot keep before him. But I feel much comfort in the hope, that great good may hereafter accrue from each of them being so unexpectedly brought under my roof.”

Soon after this I visited Aston, with part of my family, and had the pain of finding my brother's fa-

mily in distress from the death of an infant daughter, which had taken place at my sister's house, a few miles from Aston. I mention these circumstances for the purpose of introducing a note of my father's, which, though very hastily written, I think worthy of insertion.

“ June 30, 1816. I neither object to, nor care about interment in the church, or churchyard: but I make allowance for the feelings of others. I never mean to give any directions, *in this respect*, about my own funeral. . . . If the dear babe is to be interred here, I shall vastly prefer performing the service myself; and should take occasion to speak on the subject; and I really could *wish* (though I stop there,) that you and Euphemia too would be present, as something might be said profitable to all, and comfortable too. An old fashioned man, I feel no approbation of the fashion of near relations absenting themselves from the funeral. I think, instead of preventing the effects of grief, it is shrinking from that which soon would tend to comfort: and it gives others an idea, that we are afraid of looking the matter full in the face, so to speak. Depend upon it, this loss of a babe, who never actually sinned, and is doubtless interested in the covenant, will eventually (though exquisitely painful at present,) be the source of future sweetness. She is gone to join her grandmother, and her aunt and two uncles (that would have been,) &c.; and I feel a peculiar comfort in thinking that I have another descendant in heaven, whom I shall shortly join.—But enough!”

In the course of my visit he made the following contribution to a letter to his eldest grandchild.

“ July 25, 1816. From the letters which you write, I am disposed to think of you, and write to you, as becoming now a woman, not as a child. God has very bountifully dealt with you, in his providence, in giving you a sound and good understanding, and very valuable opportunities of cultivating it; which, duly improved, will do more for your respectability and comfort in this present life, than either riches, or those showy accomplishments, which you see, and perhaps are tempted to envy, in some of the children of your superiors. But to be capable of doing something useful for ourselves and others is a far better preparation for the future, than the habits of a genteel and useless life. Learn something every day. Every young person who knows how to do something in the evening, which was unknown in the morning, has made an acquisition which nothing can take from him, or her, except by incapacitating either body or mind for its functions. But you have a far more important advantage afforded you, in the religious instructions and examples set before you, and the many fervent prayers poured out for you; and in all your great privileges in this respect. But be sure, my dear Jane, do not rest in these things; nor in notions, nor decency of conduct, nor in a form of religion. Be all in earnest in secret prayer, and often in meditation on what you hear and read, and comparing all with the scriptures. Beg of God for his special converting grace, to change your heart, and, as it were, to graft the tree, that it may bring forth good fruit. O consider your soul, eternity, judgment: consider the anxious desires, and prayers, and hopes, and fears of your dear parents

on your account. What delight will it give them, to be satisfied that you have chosen the good part which shall never be taken from you! how will it be *abundant in many thanksgivings to God*; and rejoice their hearts under every difficulty! How would it gladden my heart, under all my infirmities, to hear of it before I die! What a blessing would you then be to your brothers and sisters! *I will bless thee, and thou shalt be a blessing.* May God bless these hints! May he bless you, and them all!"

The impression made upon my own mind by what I witnessed, I could not forbear thus expressing in the same letter: "How exciting is it to see him, amid infirmities and indisposition, so elevated in mind, rousing and animating all about him, in a manner quite sublime. How delightful is such a latter end!"

After hearing of our safe arrival at home, he wrote as follows:

"August 23, 1816. When we consider what may happen, and is continually happening, we ought to regard these (safe journies, &c.) as calls for cheerful gratitude; and, in such a world as this, (made such by sin, of which our sins form their full proportion,) we ought to be always on the look-out for something to cheer us, and to excite gratitude to God, and confidence in him for the future. We should determine, and pray to be enabled, to dwell on the *bright side* of the Lord's dealings with us, and dispensations towards us, and towards all connected with us; with how many unmerited mercies we are favoured, and from how many deserved evils we are exempted: and we should carefully turn away our thoughts from

the *dark side*, as it appears to us; only considering who and what we are, have been, and have done, that we may wonder and be astonished, that things are so well with us as they are.—The same reflections, extended to our whole apostate race, would lead us rather to admire that the earth is so full of the goodness of the Lord, than that it is so full of sorrow and suffering.

“ I, also, felt low and gloomy for some time after you left us: but I afterwards rejoiced that I had been favoured to see you and yours once more, &c. Gen. xlviii. 8—11. . . . You lay too much stress on place and distance. When further advanced in the school in which St. Paul was taught contentment, you will rise above all this; and you should endeavour to do it now. . . .

“ Tenderness of conscience (a healthy state) degenerates, in many instances, into a morbid sensibility: so that the consciousness of rising sinful thoughts and desires mixing with more pure motives, while it ought to produce *humiliation*, proves also the source of *dejection*: as if there were any saint on earth, or ever had been, who was wholly delivered from these things: or as if it could be otherwise, than that the keener our vision, the greater our watchfulness, and the deeper our hatred of every sin, the more quick must be this sensibility, and the more acute the pain which attends it, till all sin be extinguished. . . . We must not stop at the words, *O wretched man that I am*, but adopt the apostle's thanksgiving also, and so accompany him to the end of the chapter, and forward into that which follows it. . . . We may expect too much from our intercourse when we meet, and

thus, through the partial disappointment, fail of the comfort and benefit we might otherwise receive. It reminds me of Mr. Newton's remark: 'If, when we meet together, we expect good from one another, and not from God *by means* of one another, we resemble empty pitchers attempting to fill each other.'—As to myself, I am a poor creature, at best; and it cannot be long that I shall be able to communicate even counsels, or words of encouragement, to you. You must look above me and all others, to the Lord alone. Trials and temptations must be struggled through by frequent, fervent, wrestling prayer. You must say, *Truly my soul waiteth upon God; from him cometh my salvation.* (Psalm lxii. 1, 2; 5—8.) When Mr. Newton left Olney, I seemed to have lost my counsellor: but, carrying my difficulties immediately to the Lord, I believe I was eventually no loser."

A few months after he was called again to address his northern correspondent on a melancholy occasion, the death of a married daughter. He expresses deep sympathy with her, but deeper still with the bereaved husband; yet excuses himself from writing to *him*. "I always," he says, "look upon the loss of a beloved and suitable wife, as one of the greatest afflictions that can be endured upon earth. Were he therefore ever so nearly related to me, and acquainted personally, I should find more difficulty and incompetency in writing on the subject, than on almost any other. . . . Even faith, and prayer for submission, will not produce their full effect, in calming and reconciling the mind, till time, gliding on, has, so to speak, abated the irritation of the painful wound. . . . I am obliged to you for your particular account of



your children, as it is suited to direct my prayers for them: but I must not engage in any fresh correspondence. . . . They have the means of grace, &c. . . . Prayer, connected with occasional converse with them on the concerns of their souls, (not too frequent,) with a general tenour of discourse and conduct impressing their consciences that you deeply *mean all you say*, are your part. My children generally say, that what I spoke to others, in their presence, on religious subjects, impressed them more, than when I directly, as it were, preached to them.—The Lord has been very gracious to you in respect to several of them: while you thank him for them, it will encourage prayer for the others; and at length you may perhaps live to see the last brought home: or you may join with the inhabitants of heaven in rejoicing over the repentance of that one or more, whom you wept and prayed over, as unconverted and impenitent, while you lived on earth.—I feel considerable interest in your family and connexions. These seem a plantation in a far country, springing up from seed which I was the instrument of sowing at Weston Underwood; and which I have since done but little to tend and water. I have great cause for thankfulness in this and very many respects, that God hath made, and is making me, an instrument of good to others. Pray for me, that I may finish my course with joy, for I am still a poor, weak, sinful creature.”

His only surviving sister, Mrs. Webster, was now far advanced in years, and labouring under increasing infirmities; which drew from him repeated *portions* of letters, strongly expressive of sympathy, and adapted to her situation.

“ December 8, 1815. It is of little use to retrace the past, except for the purposes of exercising humiliation for what we have done wrong, and gratitude for God’s unmerited and numerous mercies: and, amidst all our pains, and sorrows, and infirmities, comparing all the Lord’s dealings with us with our own deservings, we must still say, *Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life:* and, if we can add, *I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,* we may well say, *It is enough: I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!* The apostle, who had his full share of tribulations from every quarter, exhorts the Thessalonians, no doubt from the feelings of his own heart, *Pray without ceasing; in every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.* As to the past, except as the effects of it remain, and the account must be given, it has no existence. Like an uneasy night, it is over, and the uneasiness with it. As to the future, it may never arrive, and all our cares and contrivances about it are vain. It is true that we must die, and, at our time of life, and with our many infirmities, it must be ere long: but all the preceding and concurring circumstances are wholly unknown to us, and we ought not, for a moment, to be solicitous about them. What we at present suffer, or enjoy, or hope for, with every alleviation or aggravation of suffering, is all which belongs to us. *The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself: sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.* The whole is in the hands of Him who hath loved his people, and redeemed them to God with his blood. *He hath the keys of death and the unseen world. Precious in his sight is the death of his saints.*

May we be numbered among them in glory everlasting! Let us only aim to be ever ready, and *give diligence to be found of him in peace without spot and blameless*; and then, when death comes to remove us, we may hope, as it were, to hear the Saviour say, *It is I, be not afraid.*"

Sentences like these, from one who was then daily walking on the borders of *the dark valley*, and has since passed through it, acquire a sort of consecrated character. He was himself in the circumstances, against which he endeavoured to support a beloved sister: and hence what he utters carries with it a force, which the same words from the lips of a mere theorist could never possess.

To the same, January 15, 1817. "I have no special advice to give: and it is only the old over again, to preach patience, meekness, &c. *Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.* All our comforts, alleviations, and hopes, are mercy: all our sorrows far less than we deserve. *Why then should a living man complain?* As Mr. Newton used to say, A sinner has no *right*, and a saint has no *reason*—for *all things are working together for his good.* And God has a right to correct us by what rod it pleaseth him. Submission, unreserved submission, is not only the most *reasonable* thing imaginable, but the most calming, consoling state of mind in this vale of tears, and produces the happiest effects on ourselves and all around us; especially when accompanied with daily earnest prayer for those, in particular, whom we regard as most instrumental in occasioning, or causing, our trials. . . . May God bless you

and all your's. As it seems now decided that we shall see each other no more on earth, may we be daily more ready for a joyful meeting, very soon, in heaven!"

In the autumn of 1816, he speaks of having made arrangements for more vigorously prosecuting his Index and Concordance, at the request of the proprietors of his Commentary: and in March 1817, after mentioning his second letter to the Rev. Peter Roe, on religious establishments, (which was noticed above,) he says; "I have finished my new edition of the Remarks. You will, in the concluding sheets, see, that I have undertaken to publish a translation of the Articles of the Synod of Dort, and all that respects them. I scarcely ever read more sound divinity: yet *too much* is aimed at. I shall annex a few notes and references; and point out what I judge to be right, and what wrong, in the whole business.—By the way, the *Sylloge Confessionum*, printed at Oxford, is a book well worth reading throughout."

Three months afterwards he says again: "I hope to form a multifarious and useful pamphlet on the Synod of Dort. I mean to make it a vehicle of my sentiments on a variety of subjects, on which I should never otherwise have spoken out." The proposed work was completed in the spring of 1818, and published in a small octavo volume.

The month of November, 1817, will be long remembered, as having inflicted upon the heart of the whole nation a deeper pang of disappointment and regret, by the death of that illustrious princess in whom all our hopes had centered, than was perhaps ever felt

on any like occasion. This event claims to be noticed here, not only as having drawn forth another publication from my father's pen,—a funeral sermon entitled, “The Voice of God to Britain,”—but for the fresh discovery which is made of the tenderness of his heart, and his lively interest in the public welfare. I shall transcribe two short extracts of letters on this subject.

“December 1, 1817. Your father preached on the Sunday a very affecting sermon from 1 Pet. i. 22—25; and shed more tears in the pulpit, than ever I saw him do before. . . . On the Wednesday (the day of the funeral) we had a very crowded congregation, and he preached again, from Micah vi. 9, a sermon which is now in the press.”

December 12, from my sister:—“I never saw my dear father so overwhelmed by any calamity, nor so ready to anticipate evil. His spirits are however now revived in some measure, and he seems gratified by the manner in which the nation at large has received the chastisement. . . . His sermons on the Sunday after he received the news were the most affecting,” (more so than the printed one, preached on the day of the funeral,)—“distressingly so indeed. He was so overpowered by his feelings, that it was with the utmost difficulty he proceeded. They say age chills the affections, but this is not the case with him. He is all tenderness and sympathy; daily, indeed, becoming more like Christ. I sometimes feel alarmed at seeing him ripen so fast for glory. Oh that we might catch some portion of his spirit before he is taken from us!”

The commencement of the year 1818 introduces

us to what furnished the principal employment of his remaining days, the preparation of a new edition of his Bible, to be printed in stereotype, and therefore to receive his last corrections and improvements. He thus writes, March 3d: "I have gone through the winter months (which have been remarkably mild) better than I could have expected. I have had but little fever: one Sunday I was laid by; but I was better in a short time. I am however very infirm, and in almost constant pain, though not acute, in my teeth and elsewhere: yet I am still as fully employed in my study as ever; and am able to preach at my church, I hope not quite in vain . . . . I wish to explain to you what has been done, and is doing, about reprinting the exposition of the Bible. As I was not employed about the last edition, I had no expectation that I should have any more to do with another, and only hoped that my rather corrected copy would be taken to print from. Nor was I aware that a new edition was in present contemplation." He then states that another was proposed, to be brought out in the course of two years and a half; that a young man, long an inmate with him, had been applied to conduct it through the press; and that he himself, judging that, "for an edition which should be the standard of the work as long as it may exist, it was highly desirable that he should, as far as life and mental powers were spared, superintend the revision," he had been induced to undertake this service. "Since this was settled," he proceeds, "the partners have come to a determination to stereotype the work; which certainly is gratifying to me."—Still this new, and, as it proved, very laborious em-

ployment, was not, in his intention, to supersede, nor did it, for some time, in fact, supersede his preparation of the proposed Concordance and Index.—“It will not be long,” he says, “ere they are finished: within the course of the summer, if I am preserved.”

In July, he says on the same subject, “I have now come to a determination to devote every evening to revision for the new edition of the Bible; and more of my time, if required, and as I am able. I have brought my revision so far, as to have nearly settled all the points for consideration, in what I had previously looked over. . . . It is evident that I have fallen into some inaccuracies in what I before ventured on critical points, and most of what is now attempted will be new, but well weighed, if I live.”

In October he adds, “I am so engaged in preparing copy, correcting proofs, &c. for the new edition of the Bible, that I can do little towards completing my Concordance.”

On the last day of May, this year, he wrote the following deeply Christian and affecting letter to his Northumbrian correspondent, who was mourning the loss of a son.

“May 31, 1818. I received your very sorrowful letter, and can truly say that I sympathize with you in your sorrow, and do pray that the Lord may comfort you under it; and not only so, but greatly sanctify it to your soul. In order to this, I shall make a few remarks on the subject, the result of much reflection on the state of this suffering dying world, and on the instructions of scripture in this particular.—All our affections and passions ought to be subordinated to the love of God, and obedience to his will;

and regulated accordingly: so that the *indulgence of sorrow* is as contrary to our duty, as the *indulgence of anger*, though more plausible, and deemed more amiable; and therefore less generally and strenuously resisted. We are no more warranted to say, ‘I do well to be sorrowful,’ (that is, to indulge sorrow,) than *I do well to be angry*. God appoints the event: he is wise, righteous, faithful, and merciful; and we deserve far worse from him. His appointment is far different from our inclination, or affection; but then we are foolish, partial, wayward, selfish. Whether then is right, his appointment or our inclination? The former, doubtless: and, if so, indulged sorrow is in fact rebellion against that appointment; and as such should be watched, and striven, and prayed against, with all earnestness.—The Lord hath taken away from us a beloved object; *the desire of our eyes with a stroke*: but, is He not all-sufficient? does He not yet live? is He not an unchangeable good? Surely we should not say, *what have I more?* He, that made the beloved object a comfort to us, is able to comfort us without it, immediately, or through other channels.—‘But, I must love my child, and mourn his loss.’ Yes, yet with submission: you must not love your child more than Christ; nor will you, if you be, as I trust, his disciple. Here your love and natural affection must be subordinated; else it will appear, that, in taking away the beloved object, he hath in fact taken away an idol.—‘But I am not fully satisfied as to his soul.’ Well then, there were hopeful tokens, on which to stay your mind. But, if it had not been so; think of Eli’s two sons, and how, when their doom was denounced, he said, *It is the*



*Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* And he bore the tidings of their death; but when it was added, *the ark of God is taken*, he fell and died. Think of David's beloved Absalom; and observe that his strongly marked expressions of sorrow are universally condemned, as rebellious and ungrateful. Think of the manner in which Job's numerous family was at once cut off; and of his jealousy, lest in their feasting they should sin against God: yet hear him say, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not.* I question whether Job was more satisfied as to the state of any of his children's souls, than you are about your son's. Think of dear Lady — —: her eldest son executed as a murderer; a hardened wretch, till the last hour: the only hope this, that, in his rage in casting himself off, the rope broke, and he lived till another was fetched,—perhaps ten minutes<sup>1</sup>—and seemed during that space softened, and earnestly crying for mercy: yet I never heard from her lips a murmuring word.—I mention these things to shew, that your trial is far less than many of God's most beloved children have suffered; and to encourage your hope that, by his all-sufficient grace, you may be comforted and made joyful, notwithstanding; as they were.

“ While our children or relations live, we cannot be too earnest in seeking their salvation; in using every means, and in pouring out our prayers incessantly for it; and in enforcing all by our example: but, when they are removed, as our duty, and our

<sup>1</sup> I believe, at his own earnest request, the time was extended to one or two hours.

ability to help them finally terminate, our sorrow and anxiety, and inquiries about their state, must be unavailing, and are very apt to be rebellious. If conscious of having done what we could, upon the whole, for their final good; and of *seeking* for them, as well as ourselves, *FIRST the kingdom of God and his righteousness*; this should be a source of thankfulness and consolation. If conscious of having neglected our duty, we are called on deeply to repent and earnestly to seek forgiveness. If there were hopeful tokens, we should be thankful for these; and leave the rest to God. If we still anxiously inquire, as if we could not submit, without some further assurance of their happiness; we should consider this as presumption and rebellion. God withholds, and submission is our duty. Jesus, as it were, says, *What is that to thee? follow thou me.—Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* May we not leave them to his tender and infinite mercies?—But these considerations should excite us to redoubled diligence and earnestness about those who are still with us. Even in such cases as those of Eli's sons and Absalom, unreserved submission is both the duty and the wisdom of the deeply afflicted sufferer. I can only add, that you must watch and pray against inordinate sorrow, as your sin and your misery; and seek for resignation, submission, and acquiescence in the divine appointment; and never cease praying for this, till you can unreservedly say, *The will of the Lord be done!* . . . May God be your comforter, and lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace! . . .

I remain, your's affectionately,

THOMAS SCOTT."

About midsummer, I received the following accounts of him, and observations from him.

From my sister. "My father grows very infirm, but becomes more heavenly every day. It is a privilege to see and hear him. He has been lately attending a poor parishioner, who died of a liver complaint. It was a very painful death, as to bodily suffering; but I think the most blessed and encouraging scene I ever witnessed. Visiting him in his illness has been quite a cordial to my dear father; the greatest treat, he says, he has enjoyed for years."

From himself. "I shall never see many of my grandchildren; and my deafness and infirmity spoil all the comfort of their company, when I do see any of them: but my more than daily prayers, from my inmost soul, are presented to God for them, that they may be *blessed and a blessing*; in whatever place and family they may spend their future lives."—"One advantage, however, arises from our occasional meetings; they certainly excite me to more particular and earnest prayers for you all, especially for your spiritual good."

I would observe, that much as he thought his company must be spoiled, especially to young persons, by his infirmities, I always found it otherwise: he seemed peculiarly attractive to my children, even to very young ones; and they would spend as much time with him as could be allowed.

To his youngest son he wrote at this time,

"June 14, 1818, I can sympathize with you in your pains of teeth, &c. as I am never free from pains of the same kind; nor shall be so long as I have one left; probably not then. My pain, however, is not

very acute ; though it makes eating always uncomfortable, often distressing : but in my case the disease is, I believe, incurable, and merely one of the symptoms of decaying nature : and *why should a living man complain ?* My mercies and my sins are both numberless ; and I am often quite ashamed of my impatience, cowardice, and unthankfulness . . . .

We are all about as well as usual ; and I have much more encouragement in my ministry at this place, than I had some time back ; considerable good seems to be done. Let us then strengthen and encourage our own hearts, and one another's, to persevere in the blessed work of our Lord, though appearances be discouraging. As I am soon to put off my armour, let me animate you to gird on your's with more alacrity ; to stir up the gift of God that is in you ; and to do what you can. *Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine : continue in them : for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.*

—Give our united love to dear Anne, and the dear children, one and all. May God *bless them, and make them blessings !* As I *decrease*, may you and your brothers *increase* : and when you decrease, may your children all come forward and increase, in one way or other serving the Lord, and promoting his cause in the world ; and this from generation to generation ! This is the daily prayer of your affectionate father."

Dr. Chalmers's Farewell Address to the Inhabitants of Kilmany having excited some controversy, in certain periodical publications, on account of the manner in which it presses particular practical duties, from the very commencement of a serious attention to

religion, without waiting to ascertain, *as a previous question*, whether the principles of faith are established in the heart; I at this period called my father's attention to it, as it stands reviewed in the *Christian Observer*, for October, 1815; asking if he did not think, that the Address was, in this respect, nothing more than an expansion of such a passage as Isaiah i. 16—18, and thoroughly scriptural in its plan. His answer was as follows:—"I think the way in which he states the general outline of his argument, both for ministers at once urging on the conscience the necessity of immediately renouncing known sin, and setting about known duty; and for their hearers honestly complying with their exhortations, and *in that way* waiting for further light and experience; is strictly scriptural: far more apostolical, than the systematic method of many modern preachers, who seem to have their arms pinioned when they would thus wield *the sword of the Spirit*. It has always been my plan, and I was animated and invigorated in it, by his statements."—He remarks upon some particular passages: but this is his view of the drift and main argument of the pamphlet, and he concludes, "*His actual experiment* is most striking."

Very soon after this I paid him a visit, in the course of which, though I travelled alone myself, more of his family met under his roof than had been collected together for many years. The occurrences of this visit will, I am persuaded, be thought interesting by the reader; though, in order to avoid too much interrupting the narrative, and for other reasons, a principal part of what passed must be postponed to a future chapter. A large party of

clergymen, forming a private society, met at his house, for the last time that he was to be among them. He took an active and animated part in their communications together, and bade them farewell in that discourse, preached in his church, of which the Rev. D. Wilson has given the outline and principal passages to the public, first in the *Christian Observer*, for May 1821, and subsequently annexed to the third edition of his funeral sermons preached on the death of my father.—A Bible Distribution Meeting was shortly after held in a barn at Aston, and attended by about four hundred country people, though it was in the midst of haytime, and on the market day of the neighbouring town. - Here also my father took his leave of such meetings by an address to the people.

But the principal communication which I shall have to make in this work, arose as follows. So many of the family being now collected, it was proposed that we should spend some time together, in conversing over our respective histories since we had been separated—reviewing “all the way which the Lord had led us”—and in receiving from the revered head of our family such admonitions and instructions, particularly with regard to the training up of our children, as it should occur to him to address to us. There were present my father and mother, three of his own children, a son in law and a daughter in law, and two grandsons. My memorandum of what passed is a letter to my absent brother, who had previously been with us, but could not prolong his stay. The particulars will, I trust, answer the double purpose of displaying my father’s character and principles, and instructing many readers: but a

more suitable place for their insertion will be found hereafter. Here, therefore, I shall only further remark, that on this occasion my father uttered the memorable sentence, which has already been given to the public in his obituary: "On the whole, I cannot but feel and consider myself as a man that has been peculiarly prospered of God; and I desire to acknowledge this with humble and devout gratitude. Yes, *goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.* Whatever my *feelings* may at any time be,—and my situation and infirmities, and perhaps also my turn of mind, expose me, at times, to considerable gloom and depression—I have not all that enjoyment which I could earnestly desire—YET THIS IS MY DELIBERATE JUDGMENT. Yea and, on the whole, I can add with good confidence, not only they *HAVE followed*, but *goodness and mercy SHALL follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*"—At this time also was recalled to mind a sentence which had fallen from him a few days before, "That, on the whole, there were few of his contemporaries, whose usefulness he could consent to exchange for that, with which it had pleased God to favour him." This sentence was the more striking, from the recollection of what I had often heard him remark, that that clause of the first Psalm, *Whatever he doeth shall prosper*, had frequently given him much pain, when he compared with it the failure and disappointment of so many of his attempts to do good. In all such cases we must remember what is written: "Surely there is AN END, and thine expectation shall not be cut off." We must not pronounce on *unfinished work*. In waiting for the day which "shall declare"

the result of things, "here is the patience and the faith of the saints."

As an additional instance of probable usefulness, he had, about this time, the satisfaction of hearing, that his Force of Truth, translated into French, was widely circulating on the continent. It had been translated into Dutch many years before, and printed at Amsterdam in 1786.

I meet with nothing further that is memorable till November the third, of this year, (1818,) when he wrote the last letter, which I shall have to present, to his aged and afflicted sister, Mrs. Webster. It exhibits an interesting proof of his own "growth in grace," and of his zeal to strengthen the hands of a beloved fellow sufferer.

"I find," he says, "in my own case, though in many respects surrounded with uncommon mercies, that I have great need of patience, amidst infirmities, and pains, and, worse than all, temptations, and conflicts with the remainder (I hope only the remainder) of indwelling sin: so that I am often disposed to dejection, and consequently to impatience and unthankfulness, and sometimes peevishness. Yet, on the whole, I think my trials and conflicts quicken me in prayer; endear the Saviour and salvation to me; render me more tender and compassionate to others, when suffering and tempted; bring me more acquainted with the promises and engagements of the new covenant; and lead me to rely on them more simply and unreservedly, notwithstanding difficulties and discouragements. As Mr. Newton once said to an inquirer, 'I think I am somewhat poorer than I was.' And, while I encourage myself in this way in



the Lord my God, and hope, in opposition to my feelings, (as if all were against me,) that *all is working together for my good*; what can I say more appropriate to animate, counsel, and solace you? You have trials, indeed, which I have not: but *the heart knoweth its own bitterness*. However, without determining any thing in that respect, nay, supposing your's ten times the greater, the difference is nothing to the Almighty Saviour, whose *strength is perfected in our weakness*. Trust in him: submit: call upon him: wait for him. Persevere in endeavouring to win over all around you, to say, *We will go with you, for God is with you*. I hope I do not forget you daily in my prayers, or any of your's. Pray for me and mine."

The accounts of his infirmities and of his labours, such labours as would be found too great for most men in sound health, go hand in hand together.

He writes, December 10, 1818: "Preparing copy, five sheets (forty quarto pages) a week, and correcting proofs, together with the desire of the partners to have the Concordance carried on, purposing ere very long to begin to print it, (as much approving the plan of a revised specimen which I sent,) makes me shrink unduly from letter-writing. *I never studied each day more hours than I now do.*"

"February 18, 1819. Never was a manufactory more full of constant employment, than our house: five proofs a week to correct, and as many sheets of copy to prepare: and, alas! Mr. ——— seems to stand his part, as to health, worse than I do. The first volume is nearly finished, and I hope much improved: yet I feel more and more dissatisfied, as discerning

more and more the defects. What I have lately been finishing off, as to the Concordance, is fully approved: but I can do so little now, that I fear it will never be finished. . . .

“So I have lived to enter on my seventy-third year, which I never expected; and am still able to study and preach. May it be to good purpose! My feelings are often very uneasy: but I am free from great and sharp suffering. Pray for me, that I may be patient and ready.”

April 23, 1819, to his youngest son:—“Just when I was thinking to answer you, I was seized with a severe cold, which, after some variations, at length, on the first of this month, brought on a fever: and it proved a more sharp attack than I have had for some years. Nearly a week I was so far confined to my bed as to do nothing. Two Sundays I was disabled from preaching: and last Sunday, with great difficulty, I performed one service. I have also recovered hitherto very slowly, and am continually harassed by *sickness*; so that I neither have appetite for food, nor take any without fear of very uneasy consequences. Yet, I have gradually been restored to my usual ability of studying, and fill up my hours nearly as before; but with increasing debility and weariness. This, indeed, must be expected in my seventy-third year, and I would not complain; for *surely goodness and mercy have followed me all my days*. . . . . But, besides sickness, my employments are a more full excuse for not writing letters, than most have. Four or five proof sheets every week: on an average, each costs one or other of us six hours revising: this besides preparing an equal quantity of copy, and other

engagements. One, in Psalms, that arrived last night, has taken me up already almost four hours, and will take up others of us above three hours more. But it is a good, and even pleasant employment, and I rejoice in it.—Sickness has been very prevalent in this neighbourhood, especially typhus fever: several have died. . . . Our little village has been preserved from it. Some of the inhabitants appear more hopeful than they were, and the congregations, as well as several instances, I hope, of conversion, have been much more encouraging than for several years last past: but what will take place when I am removed or laid aside, I cannot say. Many will, I fear, turn dissenters; and our dissenters are not of the best sort. But I must commit the whole to the Lord. *Establish thou the work of our hands, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it!* . . . I would not have you to yield to depression about your public labours. If discouragement lead you to more fervent prayer, and to devise, if you can, more decided means of coming at the heart and conscience; if you *take heed to yourself and doctrine, and continue in them*; your labour will not be in vain. You may *toil all night, and take nothing*, but after a time you shall have better success. It seems that Harborough is your present place: I should, indeed, rejoice, if a more permanent station were allotted you. . . . Remember, however, how much better it is to do a *little* good, substantial good, than, by smooth and false doctrine, to obtain crowded congregations, and do them mischief. Proper means, indeed, should be used to bring forth your parishioners; and perhaps a short printed address to them, solemn, faithful, affectionate, might

be blessed. But our usefulness does by no means depend on crowded congregations; nor is it at all proportioned to them. Regeneration and conversion must be *individual*: and, even if one in ten of those who do attend should, by God's special grace, be quickened from the death of sin, within two or three years; these will help by their example, influence, and prayers, and prove instruments of bringing forth others. Uniformly, as far as I can see, my usefulness, as a preacher, has been greatest, where my congregations have been small and discouraging: and great depression about my work has preceded success. Wait, and pray, and hope: be *steadfast, immovable, &c.*"

A small contribution to a letter dated August 12, exhibits him thus bearing up against depressing circumstances and painful feelings.

"Several events which have lately occurred, and many things respecting others in the neighbourhood, concur with my own rather dejected feelings, to render me more melancholy just now than usual. But *why art thou so heavy, O my soul? and why art thou so disquieted within me? Hope still in God, for I shall yet praise him. Hitherto he hath helped us. May he help us to thank him, submit to him, and trust him!*"

December 6, 1819; he thus expresses his opinion on a subject which has of late drawn a considerable share of public attention, and will probably, if the measures, which have been adopted in certain quarters, should be persisted in, draw still more.

"In general, it appears to me, that the laws lately made have changed the episcopal *executive* power, into a *legislative* one, without parliament being at

all aware of it; and that it would be well if some fully-considered, judicious, and calm attempt, of an enlarged kind, could be made to state the case fairly to the different members of the legislature. But I consider it as by no means exclusively the cause of the curates: for it might be so acted upon in respect of conscientious incumbents, as to drive them into the dilemma of either resigning their livings, or retaining their incomes and *responsibility*, while they could do nothing to answer that responsibility; nay, must witness those officiating as their curates, who attempted to destroy the fruits of their labours, and poison their flocks. This might be my case, if I should live till quite disabled for service.—The very title of ‘The Curates’ appeal’ seems to be exceptionable; as if curates alone were concerned: whereas it is a common concern of all who are under episcopal jurisdiction, and should be taken up as such, if at all.”

With this extract we may not improperly connect another, from a letter which he wrote in 1815, to a young clergyman of high respectability, who was refused priests’ orders, on ground which the extract itself will sufficiently explain. I the rather insert it, because, while other passages which have been introduced, demonstrate him to have been a strenuous advocate for submission to authority, this will show what limits he fixed, on one side, at least, to that duty.

“ I am indeed overdone with stated and occasional engagements, and especially at present. . . . But your case is one that must, in some measure, be attended to, and without further delay. It is a common cause. . . .

“ I and my brethren, with whom I have talked over the subject, are decidedly of opinion that you ought by no means to quit your curacy, unless you are compelled to do it; but to go on with your ministry, as a deacon, in the manner you before did. . . . By all means stand firm, and let the bishop, by a direct act of authority, turn you out, and then the real ground of it may be more clearly stated and ascertained. I need hardly say, that his requiring you to sign his explanation was, *ipso facto*, to *make a new article* by his own single authority, and to require, not the subscription legally to be required, but one altogether *illegal*; and which, if admitted, and tacitly yielded to, may become a *precedent*, and convert our limited government (limited in church as well as state,) into an arbitrary and tyrannical one. Every bishop may, by the same rule, put his own construction on any article, or clause of an article. A man may be required to sign one set of articles when ordained deacon, another when ordained priest, another when instituted, &c. No authority but that of an act of parliament can give any bishop a right thus to add to the articles to be subscribed: and, however meekly and politely it be done—*suaviter in modo, yet fortiter in re*—his lordship must be shown that you understand it in this light; and that the public must be informed of the transaction in this view of it, if coercive measures be resorted to. . . . No matter what the new article is, however unexceptionable: the imposing of it is an act of *illegal* assumption of authority. The apostles’ conduct, in respect of the magistrates at Philippi, shows, that it is perfectly consistent with Christian meekness to

stand up for the law of our country, against those, who, professing to administer it, act in direct violation of it. And Mr. Gisborne's late letter to the Bishop of Gloucester respecting the Bible Society, shows, that the authority of a diocesan is subject to legal limitations, as well as that of a magistrate. . . . I cannot be sorry that a case of this kind is likely to come to some public decision ; that it may be known what our superiors can, and what they cannot *legally* require : and I am satisfied, that, if, to the meekness and discretion already shown, you add Christian fortitude and patience, it will terminate to you also creditably and comfortably. May God direct, strengthen, and bless you.

Another death occurred in the family near the end of this year, that of my (own) mother's sister, who was also united to us by additional ties. Her husband, to whom several letters inserted in the earlier parts of this work were addressed, had died likewise within the period of this chapter, in 1815.

On the present occasion my father writes :

“ December 9, 1819 : Your account of Mrs. E. is consoling, and I desire to be very thankful. I think she was about my age. Your uncle in his eighty-sixth year continues nearly as usual ! but my infirmities grow upon me, though gradually, and I cannot expect to continue long. Pray that God may give me stronger faith, more lively hope, and more patient resignation ; for I am grievously deficient. I am as fully employed, however, as ever : and besides all the rest, I have undertaken to manufacture a shorter book from my answer to Paine. The new edition of

the Bible is my main work : we are now in Isaiah : but I fear my Index and Concordance will, after all, come to nothing, for I have now no time for it."

Deaths, as I admonished the reader to expect, crowd upon us in the progress of this chapter. The events which I have now to record, are all of that nature. The next was one in which the nation sympathized, though not with that pang of anguish arising from disappointed hopes and expectations, which it had felt for the loss of the Princess. I find it thus adverted to in a letter dated February 17, 1820.

"Your father was enabled yesterday (his birthday,) to preach a most suitable and, I think, admirable sermon on the dear old king, from Psalm xxxix. 5, which seemed to give much satisfaction, except to ——. The last head of the discourse was on the *duties* to which we are called in the present state of things ; in which, speaking of the evil of coalescing with blasphemers and infidels, he observed, that he thought almost all the truly pious among dissenters as well as churchmen, would stand aloof from such characters ; and mentioned with much approbation the speech of Mr. Hinton at the Oxford meeting, and the protest made by the Wesleyan Methodists. The church was very full, and the people very attentive."

The death of my father's aged and, for very many years past, only brother, immediately followed. My sister adverting to it observes, (March 8th,) "The same letter which brought this account, seems to indicate that my aunt Webster can last but a very short time longer.—This breaking up of the family affects me deeply, as it seems to bring nearer to my



view that dreadful stroke, which we cannot hope very long to escape, and for which my mind is notwithstanding wholly unprepared. The last time I saw our beloved father, he said to me with peculiar emphasis, ‘ You *must* try to wean yourself from me: I shall not, I cannot be with you long: it is cruel to pray for my life.’ ”

Within little more than a month, this anticipation respecting Mrs. W. was realized. My father wrote to her son, April 7th :

“ Your account of your mother is in one view very grievous, but in another highly consolatory, and suited to excite gratitude. I hope ere this she is somewhat relieved and recovered: though neither of us can expect more than mitigations and alleviations. I need hardly add, that, as far as my constant prayers avail for her support, comfort, and blessedness, she has, and long has had them; as well as you and your family. Give my best love to her, and assure her of this. It is all I can do. I hope we shall ere long meet in a world, where sickness and sorrow will be no more, because sin will be for ever excluded. . . .

“ P. S. Pray for me; not that I may live, but that my faith, hope, love, and patience, &c., may be invigorated, and that I may finish my course with joy.”

And again, on the 22d of the same month: “ When I received yours, I was just beginning to recover from a rather dangerous attack of sore throat and fever, which reduced me so much, that I fully expected to have been delivered from the burden of the flesh before my suffering sister. Two Sundays I have been silent: I mean to try to preach once to-morrow, but feel very incompetent; and am con-

vinced my work is nearly done. I am, however, now left, beyond all probability, the only survivor of our once numerous family—tottering on the brink of the grave. *So soon passeth it away, and we are gone.* Oh that I could adopt St. Paul's words under all, *None of these things move me, &c. :* but, alas! I am like an old vessel, shattered by many storms, and now scarcely able to stand a moderate gale of wind. Pray for me, that I may have more faith, hope, longing love, patience, submission, meekness, &c.

“After what you wrote of your dear mother's sufferings, in your former letter; and after reading the contents of your late letter; however nature may feel, I cannot, in my judgment, but consider her release as a matter of thankfulness: and it is highly refreshing to learn, how the Lord prepared her before he took her hence. In her case I trust all is well. May her words be remembered by you, and the prayers, which she offered while with you, be abundantly answered to you and yours!”

At this period, I received a letter from Aston: but the only insertion which it contained from my father's hand was in these words, “Only be of good courage, man!” They related to a sermon which I was preparing to preach before the Prayer Book and Homily Society. I give them as characteristic. Thus did he persevere, even when weighed down and drooping himself, in animating others to zeal and boldness in the service of his great master.

The sermon just alluded to brought me into the south about this time, and afforded the opportunity of taking two of my daughters to visit their grandfather and other relatives. I shall insert two short ex-

tracts from letters received from one of them, who did not reach Aston till after my own return to Hull.

“Aston, June 17, 1820. We came hither on Thursday. We found all pretty well: but I was very sorry and surprised to see the alteration which has taken place in my dear grandpapa’s looks since I last saw him. My aunt had told me I should see a great difference: but I did not suppose it would be near so great. This, with the ruinous appearance of the house,<sup>1</sup> seemed to make a melancholy impression upon me at first. I thought every place looked altered, and appeared gloomy; though now that I have been here a day or two, it does not appear near so much so.”

“Aston, June 29, 1820. My grandpapa is but poorly, though I think not much worse than usual. It is astonishing that he bears the heat so well as he does.” The thermometer was from 84 to 86 in the middle of the day. “He still works in the garden every day after dinner, when it is hotter than at any other time, and does not complain much of it. He preaches with great animation, though he often seems scarcely able to speak before he goes into the pulpit: but, when he begins his sermon, he seems so taken up with it, that he appears to forget his fatigue, and every thing else but his subject.”

The parting scene with these two girls, which proved final as far as their grandfather was concerned, was very striking. I wish it were in my power to state more particularly what passed: but a short extract of a letter, written a few days after, from Aston,

<sup>1</sup> This will be explained in a following letter, of September 21.

to my sister, is the only memorandum I have upon the subject.

“ Our Hull guests left us last Friday. (July 28.) The dear girls were almost broken-hearted on the occasion : and the study, the morning of their departure, might justly be called *Bochim*.<sup>1</sup> The scripture that came in order happened to be Jacob’s blessing his grandchildren ! (Heb. xi. 21, &c.) Your father could hardly proceed : and we all wept abundantly. He said, except his own children, he never was so affected at parting with any before.”

In the autumn of the same year I was enabled to take my wife, two others of my daughters, and my two sons, to pay him their last visit. Here too the parting was most affecting, while, laying his hands upon the heads of the children, he poured forth his benedictions and prayers over them, and, sobbing aloud, repeated the words, “ *One generation goeth, and another cometh,*” and added, “ but the one point of importance is, *whither we go!*”

For a brief account of what followed our departure, I was indebted to my sister.

“ October 10, 1820. Our dear father appeared much affected, and looked deplorably ill after he parted with you all : but he revived in the evening, and was better than I expected to see him. He said to me, ‘ Well, this day is over : a day I have looked forward to with much dread, and I cannot but feel thankful that it is.’ His feelings of a kind and tender nature seem to become more acute, while all those of an angry and harsh kind seem nearly dead. This

<sup>1</sup> The weepers. Judges ii.

strikes me more and more every time I see him ; and, as I believe the contrary is the natural effect of old age and disease, the influence of religion appears the more evident.”

What is here described was indeed true to an extraordinary degree concerning my dear father. It had long been delightful to observe how every thing, which might once have appeared harsh or rugged in his natural temper, had almost entirely melted away : and now, at this late period, it was deeply affecting to observe, how, if he had dropped a word that seemed to himself (others perhaps had not perceived it,) impatient, or suited to wound the feelings of any one, though ever so slightly, he would presently, with tears stealing down his cheeks, give his hand to the party concerned, and ask forgiveness.

Immediately after I left him, he wrote to his nephew, the Rev. T. Webster, a letter on which Mr. W., in handing it to me, makes the remark, “ Considering my obligations to him, the *occasion* was utterly unworthy such notice : I only send this as the *last* letter received from him.” The reader will, I trust, think with me, that it contains such a picture of the writer’s mind as ought not to have been kept back.

The fact was this : Mr. W. had visited him, and, finding him unavoidably engaged in expensive repairs of his parsonage house, had left in his study a very affectionate note, enclosing 10*l.* towards the charge. My father had delayed to acknowledge this, till he felt pained and mortified at his own neglect. At length, however, he wrote,

“ September 21, 1820. You must no doubt have for some time regarded me as greatly deficient in gra-

titude, love, or attention, in not noticing the kind note and liberal enclosure which you left on my mantelshelf; and I am conscious that I have been faulty, though not from want of affection and gratitude; as my constant prayers for you and all your's will at length testify. . . . . How I have felt and do feel, you will know better, should you live to your seventy-fourth year; or to be as much of a bruised reed in that respect (as to infirmities, &c.) as I am.—You and your's had before a place in my daily prayers, as near *relations*, and you as a *minister*: but you have now a place in them as one of my *benefactors* into whose heart God has put it to be kind to me for his name's sake. (Phil. iv. 14, 17, 18.)—The expenses of my *repairing*, or almost *refounding* my house will be considerable: but I have some hope, as one consequence of it, that, by means of the instructions he has received at Aston, one of the persons employed has been led to discover, that his own soul was built on a still worse foundation than my house; and induced to build on a tried and approved one. If not disappointed in this, I shall have a rich amends.—My infirmities so increase upon me, that I have not lately been able to officiate more than once on the Lord's day; and I have many doubts whether I shall be able to continue even that long. My son John has been with me three Sundays. . . . . He and his left us with many tears on both sides, the other day.—I am very desirous, if it could be done, to have some assistance, that my little flock might still be fed; and especially that, at times when I can do nothing, they might not be quite *as sheep without a shepherd*: but hitherto I can form no plan, so

as to succeed in it . . . . . May God bless you, in your soul, and in your ministry, and in your family, and to your pupils, and in all temporal things, in subser-viency to his spiritual blessings !”

The following is an extract of a letter, which I soon after received from him :

“ October 27, 1820. I have lately received several numbers of the ‘Sailor’s Magazine.’ It is surprising to what extent the endeavours to excite a religious spirit among sailors are carried ; and, though there are many things that might be deemed wrong, and blundering, so to speak, and a measure of enthusiasm, especially as to conversions, yet there seems nothing *antinomian* or *sectarian* ; and I cannot but think that God is blessing, and will bless the endeavours ; and I feel more excited to pray for this hitherto neglected description of our fellow sinners than formerly. I have sent the Committee a letter, and a small subscription.”

It is observable that the latest letter I have seen of his writing, and I have reason to believe it the last he ever wrote, (for it is dated March 6th, after his last illness commenced,) relates to this subject. It is to his bookseller, Mr. Seeley, desiring that he would send him, among other things, the subsequent numbers of the “Sailor’s Magazine,” in which he evidently still felt much interested.

On the day after the letter just inserted, he wrote to the Rev. D. Wilson, concerning a paper which he had drawn up on the subject of final perseverance, and concerning the notes which Mr. W. had taken of one or two of his later sermons. He says “ I can have no objection to the insertion in

the Christian Observer of any notes you made of the sermon you refer to. In fact, I think such notes of several of my later sermons would be far preferable to the general sermons which I have published: but I cannot take them; and it would not do for them to come from me: I am a very unpopular writer of sermons . . . .

“As to the Concordance, it is adjourned *sine die*. After years of labour and considerable expense, I relinquished it, that I might attend to what appeared to me more directly the improvement of my talent, and the use of my few remaining days. A few months might have completed it: but I deliberately determined, in this respect, to take my labour for my pains, and to expect neither credit, nor profit, nor even usefulness from it. It kept me out of mischief, as I said to you, and I think prepared me for revising my Commentary to better advantage, especially by adducing references to notes throughout, which may in some measure answer, to the purchasers of the new edition, the end of a topical index. Should I be spared, which is not likely, to conclude the revisal, and have any measure of ability for study, I should probably endeavour to produce the Concordance of names, and the topical Index, apart from the rest. The former is already finished, in a manner, I think, nearly complete: but it wants separating from the other parts of the voluminous manuscripts.”

On the same subject of the Concordance, he wrote to me, December 14th, in consequence of my putting the question, ‘Does not Cruden answer every practical purpose?’ as follows:

“The errors and deficiencies in Cruden are tenfold



more than are generally suspected; and I believe several reasons induce even the proprietors to wish to substitute a new work, under a new name, in the place of it . . . Had I not been impeded by age and infirmity, and unexpectedly taken off from completing it, by the opportunity of superintending the new edition of the Bible, I am persuaded it would have been published. As it is I have my labour for my pains. But the will of the Lord be done.—The topical Index, if executed at all, must be made by one who is thoroughly acquainted with the whole work, and enters into the spirit of it. The projected one, if ever completed, will, I am persuaded, be acceptable to many purchasers of the several editions of the exposition. . . .

“ I grow more and more infirm. My *sickness* seems incurable; and I am often oppressed with asthma: yet I go on doing something.”

As this is the last mention that occurs of the Index and Concordance, I shall here observe, that a Topical Index to my father's Commentary, upon a plan approved by himself, is in a course of preparation, and that his whole mass of papers, (a very large one,) pertaining to the Concordance, is in the hands of the person best qualified to turn them to account, if that should be judged practicable and expedient. If any reader should be disposed to regret his having employed so much time and labour upon a work which may very probably never be executed, I would mention, besides its having, no doubt, materially contributed to the improvement, of his References and Commentary, what he once said to me upon the subject, which reminded me of the beautiful anecdote in

Dr. Buchanan's life, concerning the correction of the proof sheets of the Syriac Testament: "Whether," said my father, "this work ever comes to any thing or not, it repays me for my labour, by the delight I receive from having the whole body of scripture thus *kept constantly revolving* before me."—The veriest drudgery, as many would esteem it, about the sacred volume, is not, it appears, barren of enjoyment and even present reward.

At the beginning of the ensuing year he speaks of dejection, which he terms "unaccountable," at times oppressing him. To others, however, who consider his age, his circumstances, as being always confined to one spot, his constant indisposition, his extreme deafness, his frame worn down by incessant labours, it will rather appear wonderful that he should have been able to summon up resolution to write, and speak, and act as he did, than unaccountable that his spirits should sometimes have failed him. Brighter gleams, however, from time to time, shone upon his mind, when he looked beyond the present scene. To his servant inquiring of him, at this period, how he did, he replied, "Very poorly: I shall soon be at home:" and he added, "Oh how my heart leaps and exults within me, at the thought of so very soon joining the glorious company before the throne of God!"

February 15, 1821, he wrote his last letter to his old friend Dr. Ryland, of Bristol, as follows:

"My dear sir—My infirmities and diseases grow upon me, and leave me little time or heart for many things which I should otherwise rejoice to do; especially as to correspondence. You must then excuse

apparent neglect.”—The next paragraph relates to Dr. Carey, and has been inserted in an early part of this work.

“ Your account of your sister’s death, and of her conversation with poor old Dr. —, is in itself very interesting, and to me especially. He was a very kind and generous friend to me, many years ago : but, alas ! my feeble endeavours and prayers for his good have hitherto been in vain. May God bless your beloved dying sister’s faithful attempt. . . .

“ I wish we could do something to aid your mission : but I can only pray. I have no ability of moving from my obscure village, and my means of other kinds are less than they were some time past.

“ Indeed I do not expect to continue long. O pray for me, that my faith, hope, love, patience, and fortitude may be increased ; and that I may finish my course with joy : for I am apt to be impatient, unbelieving, and cowardly.

“ I rejoice that you are able to go from place to place, in your services of love : may the Lord prosper you in all ! Could you call at little Aston, you would meet with a hearty welcome, and be sure to find us at home.

“ Mrs. S. joins me in hearty Christian remembrance to you, Mrs. R., and all yours. May God bless you and all your’s, and every work and labour of love in which you engage ! I remain, my dear old friend and fellow labourer, your’s faithfully,

THOS. SCOTT.”

His last letter to me was dated a few days after, February 23. In reply to his complaints of dejection, I had reminded him of the remarkable sentence which

he had uttered at the meeting of our family party two years and a half before, and had quoted it at length, as it has been given above. His answer is very striking.

“ Dear John—My deliberate judgment on the whole is the same as I expressed in conference with you and others: *Goodness and mercy have followed me, &c.* Perhaps, when warmed with the subject, I spake more strongly of my own personal confidence, than my habitual *feelings* warrant: but my dejected feelings are often perfectly unaccountable, and the least matter makes me subject to them. But I trust all will end well. Yet I apprehend, that to die of lingering disease and infirmity, shut out from ordinary resources of refreshing intercourse and employment, requires at least as much patience, and as strong supports, as the sufferings of a martyr in other circumstances: and the want of duly expecting this is one reason, I suppose, why many excellent worn-out old men have been dejected. It came upon them unexpectedly, and disconcerted them.

“ I have not seen Dr. Milner’s Sermons; but will procure them.

“ I hope that, notwithstanding all interruptions and difficulties, and your own fears and feelings, it is appointed for you to, &c. &c. If you have not that *snare*, which, being aware of it, you will more watch and pray against, some other will come in its stead. Such must be the case, while, with *sin dwelling in us*, we live in such a world as this. Had I had those views of arduousness, importance, and awful responsibility, when I engaged in my Commentary, which I have at present, I should have shrunk from the ser-

vice with trepidation. I have much to be humbled for, and have had many painful rebukes,—and still have; yet probably it was better that I engaged than if I had not. We do nothing from perfectly pure motives: yet we must *occupy* with our modicum of talent as we can. . . .

“ I can only add my love, and most endearing remembrances to dear Frances, (whom I especially think of in my prayers,) and Jane, and Fanny, Anne, Mary, John, &c. &c. May God bless you and all of them, and make all of them blessings to others long after I am gone. *Let the children of thy servants continue, and their seed be established before thee!* (Psalm cii. 28.)

I am, dear John, your affectionate father,

THOS. SCOTT.

“ I have revised copy to the end of Thessalonians.”

Thus his correspondence with me closed: a more wise, more pious and holy, or more affectionate conclusion of it I could not have desired. My next letter from Aston brought the tidings of his fatal illness.

Four days after the preceding date, he wrote to the husband of his deceased sister, Mrs. Burgess. The death referred to in this letter is that of the niece to whom some letters, already inserted, were addressed.

“ February 27, 1821. I am grown very infirm and diseased, and have little time or heart for letter-writing: yet the afflictive tidings of your daughter's almost sudden death, joined to my nephew W.'s letter, induce me to undertake a few lines to you. I do greatly sympathize with you under the heavy afflic-

tion : yet there were many circumstances respecting it which may prove consolatory and supporting. . . .

“ My heart’s desire and prayer for you is, that you may be saved : and in one way or other you and your’s are seldom forgotten in my prayers any day, and often are repeatedly remembered. . . . May God bless you, and all your’s ; and gather in those that are not gathered ; and be your comforter in sorrow, your supporter in old age, your hope in death, and your portion for ever ! Pray for me and mine. I am, dear brother, your’s affectionately,

THOS. SCOTT.”

On the same day, he wrote his last letter to his friend in Northumberland, which I shall insert almost entire.

“ Dear Mrs. R——, A letter from you, though to spread your troubles before me, seems a refreshment to me, as it reminds me of former times ; and because I consider all who are converted by your means, or in answer to your prayers, as in some measure the fruit of my former labours. But I am now old (in my seventy-fifth year,) and infirm, and diseased in various ways, and incapable of much exertion : yet I still preach once every Lord’s day, and expound in my house in the evening. I am also yet employed with my pen, almost as much as formerly, in preparing and superintending a new stereotype edition of my Family Bible ; but with painfulness and weariness, which leave me little time or spirits for correspondence. I bless God, however, that, though excluded by deafness from much conversation, my eyesight is not materially impaired ; and I can use my pen as nimbly as ever.

“ I can sympathize with you in your feelings concerning your children, and children’s children. All my children are, I trust, serving God : and my anxiety, as far as that is concerned, is about my grandchildren, of whom I have nineteen, and expect a twentieth very soon. . . . I pray in hope, that they will be gathered one by one, though most of them after my death : and in this hope, I use such means as I can ; and desire to leave the whole with a sovereign God, who delighteth in mercy.

“ You must go on, blessing God for what he has done ; using what means you can with those that are yet *without* and the furthest off ; and *persist* in prayer for them. You must stir up such of your children as serve God, to do what they can—and probably, if zealous with a loving and prudent zeal, they may do more than you can,—and to concur with you in prayer for them : and thus you must endeavour to bow in submission to God ; to wait his time ; to be willing to leave the world without witnessing their conversion ; yet hoping and praying that they will at length be converted. The promises of God to his people are so far encouraging : yet he has not absolutely engaged for the conversion of all and every one : and we must leave that painful subject, (*casting all our care on God,*) till the bright world to which we are going shall fully satisfy us that He did all wisely and well.

“ I also sympathize with you respecting your minister ; and do think it not only very hard as to him, but somewhat disgraceful as to the congregation, that a frugal maintenance cannot be raised for him. And as he ‘ does not make the people uneasy,’ were I

among you, I would try to do it for him. I think his decided friends, though not rich, should rather overstep usual bounds of contribution, trusting in the Lord, on such an emergence; and become *bold beggars* in his cause, where they would rather suffer than ask any thing for themselves. . . .

“ I can truly say I seldom forget you and your’s. . . I have lost my only brother, aged eighty-six, and my only sister, aged seventy-seven, during the last year; and am the only survivor of thirteen children; and am dropping into the grave. May we be well prepared to go whenever the summons comes! Pray for me and mine: for me especially, that God would give me stronger faith; more lively, assured hope; more patience; more love; that I may *finish my course with joy*. Earnestly begging of our most merciful God abundantly to bless you and all your’s, I remain, dear Mrs. R——, your affectionate friend and servant,

THOS. SCOTT.”

I shall now close this chapter with a few letters which I have reserved, in order to avoid too much which did not contribute to the narrative.

To a niece, left by the death of her mother at the head of a family:

“ March 13, 1815. Your situation at present, though it cannot and ought not perhaps to be declined, is one of great importance and difficulty, and probably of temptation; considering how early days the present are with you as to religion; and how many things, being at the head of such a family, will bring under your management, and in your way. But without further information as to particulars, I



cannot enter on much appropriate counsel. You have two duties: they cannot interfere, but they may *seem* to do so. You must honour, and obey, and oblige your father, in all things, except when a higher duty to God forbids. You must follow his inclination in preference to your own; but not in preference to the will of God: and the more you give up your own will, the more you will find liberty to follow your conscience in respect of the will of God. By prudence and consulting propriety; by meekness and gentleness, united with firmness, in things of importance; it may be practicable to you to maintain comfort and respectability in your situation, and give a happier turn to all domestic concerns. But eagerness and pertinacity in little things, and pliability in things of importance, will undo, or prevent all this.

“ Allow me to touch one subject which I know requires great delicacy. A great deal indeed will depend on your *appearance* and *dress*. I do not want to convert you into a quaker, or put you into livery: but I cannot be faithful without saying, that in your present station, and especially as being known to pay attention to religion, a considerable revolution will be necessary from what I saw, when I last met you. You will take the hint in good part; it is well meant; and, if moderately attended to, as to style, expense, and attention to dress, will have the happiest effects, in every way. Especially it will make way for your becoming acquainted with those who would be a great help to you, and exempted from the giddy acquaintance of those who can only hinder and ensnare you.

“ I should particularly recommend *method* to you,

in your employments. If you would at all prosper in your soul, you must secure time for retirement, reading the scriptures, and helps in understanding them; and prayer, secret, particular, earnest prayer. Without this nothing will be done. This time, in your situation, will, I apprehend, be best secured by retrenching an hour from sleep, and such things as merely relate to external decoration, in the morning, before your more hurrying engagements begin; and in the evening before it be too late. But securing time in the morning is the grand thing: not that the other should be neglected; but it will necessarily be exposed to more interruptions. A plan, however, should be laid down, and adhered to, with as much regularity, at least, as that about our meals. That must sometimes be broken in upon; yet not often. Above all, as much as possible, secure the whole of the Lord's day, and firmly stand out against Sunday visitings. In addition to this, if you would improve your mind and heart, learn to redeem the fragments of time. Have a book at hand, that when you are waiting perhaps for your father or friends to dinner, or on similar occasions, you may not let the little oddments of time elapse, or rather heavily drawl on as a burden: but take the book, and read a little; and, if you lift up a short prayer over what you read, so much the better. It is surprising how much I have read and learned in these fragments of time, which most people lose. *Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost.*

“ I am afraid your influence, at first at least, will be insufficient for what I am about to add; but persevering, firm, and mild efforts may do much: I mean

in avoiding *late visits*, and the *late* entertainment of visitors. *Even among pious persons, I scarcely know any thing more hostile to the religion of the closet—that is, the religion of the heart and soul.*

“What you mention in respect of original sin, lies at the bottom of all Christianity; and we never learn any thing else to much purpose, till we become deeply sensible of innate depravity; of a *moral disease*, which we cannot cure, and have not heart of ourselves to cure: but which the Lord alone can cure. We ought, however, to seek the cure from Him, as we do health from the physician, by applying to him, trusting him, following his directions, welcoming his medicines, avoiding what he inhibits, &c.—If you propose any special questions to me, in opening your mind as you mention, I will, if able, give you the best counsel I can. I remain, your affectionate uncle,

THOMAS SCOTT.”

To the same.

“April 5, 1818. I am not disposed to prescribe to any one an implicit deference to the sentiments or maxims of another, however senior or superior: but, when the junior or inferior differs from the superior, it should be with great caution, and many prayers and fears lest the difference should be the effect of mistake, or inferior knowledge, judgment, and simplicity, rather than of more correct and scriptural views of truth and duty. The peculiarity, which I have sometimes noticed in approved characters with some disapprobation, I have in many instances lived to regard as the result of deeper experience, more enlarged observation, and a more exact knowledge of

the word of God, of the human heart, and of the state of the world and the church.

“ I believe that many cordially approve of the general outline of the established church, who yet dissent from it, even where they might hear the genuine gospel preached in the church, from some such objections as —— has to the Athanasian creed. I, however, think that the advantages of our worship so much counterbalance what may be thought imperfections, that I am cordially attached to it; though not with such indiscriminating partiality as some are. I have little objection to the doctrine, or to the spirit, of the Athanasian creed. Properly understood, it only pronounces the damnatory sentence on those whom the scripture condemns; and this only in a *declarative* way, not as *denouncing* them, or *imprecating* evil upon them. But, as it endeavours too particularly to explain what, after all, is incomprehensible; as many have objections to it; and as it is appointed only in the morning service, which is otherwise sufficiently long; I do not very frequently use it.” . . . .

To a clergyman, the vicar of a large and important parish.

“ August 12, 1819. Reverend and dear sir, I should count it a privilege, if I could suggest any hints, which might help you in that most important charge to which the Lord has called you: but I especially am without *experimental* acquaintance with the subject. I have, however, made many observations on what others have attempted.

“ When curate of Olney, I, as it were, inherited a

prayer-meeting conducted on the same plan, but not so wild and extravagant, as the prayer-meetings in your parish are : but I soon found it needful or advisable to withdraw, and to leave the persons who conducted it to themselves ; neither opposing nor countenancing it. Most of them became dissenters, some dissenting ministers. Since that time, I have never had any opening for any thing of the kind : but I used to advise my people, when they visited one another, or were visited by relations from other places, or met on any occasion, that one of them should read a chapter, and that the same person, or some other, should pray particularly with the company, and for their neighbours, the sick, their minister, and ministers in general, and missionaries, and the enlargement, purity, and peace of the church : but not to attempt other prayer-meetings. This plan seemed to answer every needful purpose : and often, when I visited the sick, or went to a distant place, a number would collect around me : and I gave appropriate counsel and prayed with them. In this village, the whole population does not much exceed seventy persons, my own family included : what a contrast to your parish ! I expound in my kitchen to such as attend on a Sunday evening, and pray with them : and in winter on the weekday evening. But we have no praying men or praying women, (I mean in public,) either to help or hinder us. In a neighbouring village, there are prayer meetings, at which some of my congregation attend and assist ; but I take no part in respect of them.

“ In general, I am apt to think it very difficult for a minister in the establishment to form, or conduct

prayer-meetings, in such a manner as that the aggregate good shall not be counterbalanced, or even overbalanced by positive evil. But men of far greater experience, and capacity of judging, have thought otherwise; among whom, I especially look up to Mr. Walker of Truro, whose regulations I thought very judicious. But I am also, I fear, prejudiced; as the evils which arose from those at Olney induced such an association of ideas in my mind, as probably never can be dissolved.—Two or three effects were undeniable. 1. They proved *hotbeds*, on which superficial and discreditable preachers were hastily raised up; who, going forth on the Lord's day to the neighbouring parishes, intercepted those who used to attend Mr. Newton. 2. Men were called to pray in public, whose conduct afterwards brought a deep disgrace on the gospel. 3. They produced a captious criticising, self-wise spirit, so that even Mr. Newton himself could seldom please them. These things had no small effect in leading him to leave Olney. 4. They rendered the people so contemptuously indifferent to the worship of God at the church, and, indeed, many of them to any public worship in which they did not take a part, that I never before or since witnessed any thing like it: and this was *one* of my secret reasons for leaving Olney.

“As what I have written seems to go far towards a negative answer to your first question; it will be needless to give any opinion on the modification of such institutions. In general, if any are explicitly countenanced by the clergyman, they should exactly conform to such regulations as he shall deem expedient: or, if he attend, none should officiate except

himself, or some clerical friend or assistant: for it must destroy all ministerial authority and influence, for him to be present, while one of his flock, a layman, is the mouth of God to the company, or of the company in addressing God. It is also an irregularity, which cannot be justified to our diocesans or others.

“ If prayer-meetings cannot be thus conducted, under the countenance of the clergyman, it appears to me, that he had better leave them, and those concerned in them, to take their course, neither directly supporting nor opposing them; but endeavouring to inculcate those general principles, which may silently operate to regulate and purify them; and using his influence with the more teachable and manageable of those concerned, in private admonitions, counsels, and cautions, nearly in the manner which you describe. In the mean time, he must lay his account with being less *popular* than those who more humour the people, and give them more importance among their brethren; which is one grand advantage that dissenters of every kind have over pious clergymen.

“ No caution can be more important, than what relates to the persons called forth to take an active part in such services. The first proposal should be made with *extreme care*: for, when once a man is considered as one of the praying or expounding persons, it will not be easy to lay him aside, even if he become a disgrace, and a distress to most of the company.—As to women praying in public in the presence of men, it is so antisciptural, so inconsistent with all the subordination in domestic life, and with all that modesty and delicacy which are the chief

ornaments of the sex, that I should feel at liberty openly to protest against it. But, perhaps, it may not be expedient, as yet, for you to do so. Nothing but an undoubted prophetic spirit in the woman herself can render it consistent with scripture.

“ But ‘ good is done.’ God may do good notwithstanding : but are we *to do evil that good may come ?* Does he need our misconduct to accomplish his purposes ? Shall we break his laws to promote his gospel ? *Good* is done : but is not *mischief* also done ? The mischief is the direct consequence : the good by occasion at most. Such men, Mr. Cecil used to say, have but one side in their account-book : they set down their gains, but not their losses : and, these being greater than their gains, they become bankrupt. The prejudice excited among those without, and the various ways in which, by such practices, the success and spread of the gospel are hindered, (besides the mischief done to the persons concerned,) warrant the assertion that they are most grievous evils ; *bad bills* indorsed sometimes by good men.

“ Upon the whole, I think you are going on in as hopeful a manner as can reasonably be expected, and I rejoice in the prospect of usefulness, which lies before you. I pray God to direct, counsel, and prosper you ; pray for me, especially that I may have patience and hope to the end. I am, reverend and dear sir, your friend and servant,

THOMAS SCOTT.”

To a clergyman who had consulted him upon a question, which the letter itself will sufficiently explain.

“ December 20, 1819. Reverend sir, Your letter is written in so proper a spirit, and relates to so in-



teresting a subject, that I should deem myself favoured if I could give a satisfactory answer to it.

“ I have long felt some of the difficulties which you state, in respect of direct addresses in worship to the Holy Spirit, *personally* and *separately*; of which certainly but few are found in the sacred scriptures. Perhaps, as all our spiritual worship must be offered by His sacred teaching and influence on the heart and mind; and as the grand promise of the New Testament, comprising all the rest for spiritual blessings, relates to God’s giving us, through Christ, the Holy Spirit of life, light, holiness, power, liberty, and love; it is less proper that our prayers should be offered *directly* and *personally* to the Holy Spirit.—The form of Baptism, *into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, seems to me to recognise God our Saviour, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In this view, when God is addressed without personal distinction, I consider the address as made to the God of salvation; and the Holy Spirit *included*, whether prayer or praise be offered.—The *trishagion*, or threefold ascription of holiness to *Jehovah*, both in the Old and New Testament, seems an act of worship to the Holy Spirit, together with the Father and the Son.—The form of blessing appointed by Moses, in this view, implies a prayer to the Holy Spirit, in the threefold repetition, Num. vi. 24—27.; as does the apostolical benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14.—I have no hesitation in my mind, as to the express act of adoration, in Rev. i. 4. being offered personally to the Holy Spirit, according to the emblematical language of that book. And, when salvation is ascribed to *our God, who*

*sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb*, I consider the term GOD as denoting the God of salvation, as above explained; and the *Lamb that was slain*, as referring to the incarnate Saviour's propitiation and mediation, through whom we sinners approach God with all our worship, and to eternity shall view all our salvation as coming to us through his sacrifice. —It appears to me, that the reason why the Son is so frequently addressed, in both scriptural prayers and adoring praises, springs from his mediatorial character, as *God manifested in the flesh*; and as *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*; and as, in addressing *him* who owns us as brethren, we do not forget his Deity, and recollect also, that he *suffered, being tempted, that he might succour the tempted*. The style of the New Testament is, *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; as that of the Old Testament is, *the God of Abraham, or of Israel*: but, in both, the true God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *One Name*, three persons: and, in addressing *God in Christ*, we come to God by Christ, even as if we addressed God as the Father of Christ. This seems clearly exhibited in the apostolical practice: *Through whom we have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father*.

If then we be fully convinced that the Holy Spirit is God, and that all divine perfections and operations, together with every personal property, are ascribed to him, there can be no doubt but he is the object of divine adoration. Where God is addressed, without distinction of persons, the Holy Spirit is virtually addressed: all that dependence, gratitude, love, and honour, which are required as

due to our God, are required towards the Holy Spirit; and therefore worship, and adoring praise and prayer, cannot be improper. Yet, probably, had not the controversies with Arians and others made way for it, so large a proportion of personal addresses to the Holy Spirit, would not have been found in our public services. I, however, feel no dissatisfaction respecting them, though in other acts of worship I am not so generally and explicitly led to address the Holy Spirit.

“Should these thoughts induce you to propose any further questions, I will endeavour to answer them. I grow old and infirm, though still employed: but I much need your prayers: and, if you and your friends have derived any benefit from my labours, (to God be all the glory!) do not forget me at the throne of grace, but pray for me, that God would give me the increase of faith, and hope, and patience; that I may not dishonour him in my closing scene, or, *after preaching to others, be myself a cast away; but may finish my course with joy.* With prayer that God may abundantly bless you and yours, and all your labours, I am, reverend Sir, your faithful friend and brother,

THOS. SCOTT.”

The person addressed, observes, in transmitting me the letter, “As I believed the late Mr. Scott to be the best Bible-scholar living, being in the possession of the result of *his* inquiries upon the question, I have been and am perfectly at rest upon it.”

His last letter to the Rev. John Mayor, Shawbury, Salop.

“January 2, 1821. My dear old friend, I am unwilling to deny your request to write a few lines in

answer to your kind letter; but multiplied engagements and many infirmities must plead for a much shorter letter than I should otherwise write.

“ I am, indeed, very far from good health: I am wearing down by increasing infirmities, local and chronic diseases, and old age,—almost seventy-four. I have not been out of my parish, or at the further end of it for several years. One service on the Lord’s day seems to overdo me; and I have got a curate. Yet, in my study I apply myself nearly as much as usual, though with much uneasiness and weariness.— Well, after all, *Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all my days, and I hope, I shall dwell in the house of God for ever.*

“ I am thankful that you write as in health and spirits; and for the favourable account you give of your family. May God gather them all into his family, and make them and their’s blessed! *May the children of thy servants continue, and their seed be established before thee!* (Psal. cii. 28.) My children, I trust, are in the way to heaven, and useful to others. I have nineteen grandchildren; all hopeful, as far as we can see: one, I trust, more than hopeful; and others, I hope, coming forward. Pray for them.

“ I am as fully aware of ——’s unfairness, as well as gross blunders in quotation, as any book can make me: but he has the whole human heart on his side; and he furnishes some plausible arguments to those numbers of ignoramuses, who hate the genuine gospel, but are totally incompetent to make any reply to it. . . .

“ I have the honour of having as many lies told of

me, as most men in these days. I never wrote to — whatever I thought or said privately, any thing like what is imputed to me. Challenged repeatedly in a peculiar style, I found it necessary to write a letter declining the challenge, as *civilly* as I could with *sincerity*; and I have no objection to the letter being published in any newspaper, if any choose to do it. He too, though less specious, among another company has all the human heart on his side; but doing good is against wind and tide, and goes on slowly; yet, by God's blessing, surely.—I am sorry for what you write about Mr. —. . . . Indeed, *eager, vehement, speculating* Arminianism is most nearly allied to Pelagianism, and the transition is almost imperceptible. No doubt — and his meaner coadjutor — defend Pelagianism, as well as Arminianism.

“ So you are become a dabbler in prophecy, as almost every one is in these days. I read, in various ways, almost numberless tracts, papers, pamphlets, books upon the subject of unfulfilled prophecies: but still I cannot prophesy. Nor do I yet see reason to alter the opinions, which I have given in my former editions of the Family Bible. In Daniel I have endeavoured to elucidate and confirm those views; I hope, successfully. When I come (should I live so long,) to Revelation, I will carefully revise that; and I will keep your letter, and weigh what you have said; for I desire light from every quarter, and I trust sincerely pray daily to be set right where wrong.—At present, I am decidedly of opinion, that all describing the church, or the new Jerusalem, in the xxist and xxiid of Revelation, relates to the heavenly state: that all relating to the earthly state

ends, in the xxth chapter with the account of the day of judgment: that the coming and reign of Christ, before and during the millennium, will be spiritual, not personal: that the resurrection of *souls* does not mean the resurrection of bodies—but as John the Baptist was Elijah: and that, at last, we are all much in the dark, and should not be confident; as our descendants will know.—If the new Jerusalem—examine its form and size—is to be placed literally in Judea, how can all the kings of the earth bring their glory and riches into it,—from Mexico, Peru, China, Russia, &c.? and what is to be done with them there?—But I desist: I can conceive of a figurative, but can form no manner of conception of a literal fulfilment: and the whole book is allegorical. . . .

“ Our best love to Mrs. M., and your brother and relations in London, and to my goddaughter, Jane. May God bless you, and them, and all their's, and make them blessings! May he grant you and your's a happy year, and many happy years! Pray that God would increase my faith, hope, and patience, especially, during my closing scene, that I *may finish my course with joy*.—I remain, dear sir, with much affection and esteem, your faithful friend and brother,

THOMAS SCOTT.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

### HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH.

OF the last solemn scenes of this chapter, the Rev. D. Wilson thus introduces the account, which he has already given to the public in his excellent funeral sermons.

“ During several years preceding the event itself, his bodily infirmities had been gradually increasing. His strength and natural spirits at times sensibly failed. His own impression was that his departure was approaching, and he contemplated it with the calmness and tranquillity which I have already noticed as being implied in the first clause of my text.<sup>1</sup> He preached more than once from the words of St. Peter, with an evident reference to his own case, *Knowing that I must shortly put off this my tabernacle.* He said to me about two years since, ‘ I feel nature giving way ; I am weary of my journey, and wish to be at home, if it be God’s will ; ’ meaning that he *desired to depart and to be with Christ.* The nearer he came to the time of his dismissal, he became the more earnest in prayer, that God would uphold him during the scenes of suffering and trial which might await him before his last hour, expressing at the same time the deepest conviction of his own weakness and unworthiness, and his constant

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.

need of divine mercy. He had been particularly anxious during the entire period of his ministry to be preserved from dishonouring his holy profession ; and now, as life wore away, he became more and more fervent in prayer for grace that he might not say or do any thing, that should lessen the weight of what he had previously taught and written."

What has already appeared in these pages will amply confirm the correctness of these representations.

Again, after introducing some sentences from the last sermon which he heard my father preach, Mr. Wilson proceeds : " Thus did this holy man continue to speak and act in the near view of death. In the mean time he remitted nothing of his accustomed labours. It is but a short time since he wrote to one of his children, ' I believe I never worked more hours daily in my study than I now do.' Increasing deafness indeed precluded him almost entirely from conversation. His spirits also failed him more and more, and he would sometimes burst into tears, whilst he assured his affectionate family that he had no assignable cause of distress whatever. But his judgment and habits of close thought seemed to remain unimpaired still. His last discourse was delivered on Sunday, March 4th, from the words of the apostle Paul, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* In the evening of the same day he expounded as usual to several of his parishioners assembled in his rectory, from the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. He entered with much animation into both these subjects ; and in the evening he applied to himself in



a very affecting manner the prayer of the penitent publican, *God be merciful to me a sinner*. In this striking manner did he close his public testimony to *the faith* which he had *kept* during his whole preceding ministry."

Very cordially also do I concur in the following additional remarks with which Mr. W. prefaces the part of his subject to which we are approaching :

" Before I proceed to give some particulars of his most instructive and affecting departure, I must observe that I lay no stress on them as to the evidence of his state before God. It is the tenour of the life, not that of the few morbid and suffering scenes which precede dissolution, that fixes the character. We are not authorized by scripture to place any dependence on the last periods of sinking nature, through which the Christian may be called to pass to his eternal reward. The deaths of the saints described in the inspired volume are, without exception, the concluding scenes of long and consistent previous devotedness to the service of God. Such are those of Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David. That of Stephen is the only narrative of this kind in the New Testament, which regards the article of death at all ; and the circumstances in which he was placed, as the first martyr of the Christian church, may well account for the exception. The great apostle of the gentiles, and the other inspired founders of the new dispensation, are exhibited to us in the holiness of their lives, in the calmness of their approach towards death, in the deliberate judgment they form of their past labours, in their exhortations to others to supply their vacant posts of duty, in their triumphant anti-

ceptions of their future reward ; but not in the actual moments of their final conflict. It would therefore have been no subject of surprise, if the last days of our lamented friend had been wholly clouded by the natural operations of disease. We should then have drawn the veil entirely over them, as in the case of many of the eminent servants of Christ, in every age. But, though no importance is to be attached to these hours of fainting mortality, with reference to the acceptance and final triumph of the dying Christian, yet, where it pleases God to afford one of his departing servants, as in the instance before us, such a measure of faith and self-possession as to close a holy and most consistent life, with a testimony which sealed, amidst the pains of acute disease, and in the most impressive manner, all his doctrines and instructions, during forty-five preceding years, we are called on, as I think, to record with gratitude the divine benefit, and to use it with humility for the confirmation of our own faith and joy."

These remarks premised, I proceed to lay before the reader the best account in my power of the deeply affecting scene ; which I shall do chiefly in the words of letters written, and memorandums made on the spot. This, I trust, will be to the reader, who feels himself sufficiently interested in the event to excuse the minuteness of the narration, the most satisfactory plan that I can adopt.

Sunday, March 4, was, as has been already stated, the day that terminated my father's public ministrations. Almost immediately afterwards he seems to have suffered a degree of indisposition ; but not such

as rendered it necessary to inform the absent branches of his family before Friday, March 16th. A letter of that date brought me this intelligence: "Your dear father has for this last week been seriously indisposed. The beginning of the preceding week he caught a severe cold. On Friday (the 9th,) he was, however, much better of his catarrhal affection, but on Saturday was attacked, in his usual way, with fever, which continued severe till Monday, (the 12th,) when it seemed to yield to the usual remedies, and he was so much better as to come down stairs for a short time. In the night the feverish symptoms increased. He was better again yesterday morning; but has since been so ill that I resolved to send for Dr. Slater. He has just left us this afternoon. He says the complaint is quite the same as on former occasions, advises that we should pursue the plan already adopted," &c.

The day after this letter was written, my sister, quite providentially, as it seemed, and notwithstanding many obstacles had opposed her journey, went over to Aston; little expecting what she was to meet with there. The next day, Sunday, my second brother arrived. The cause of his journey, and the state in which he found things, are thus described in a letter of Monday, March 19th.

"I had sent a man and horse over on Saturday evening to ascertain my father's real state, with directions to return early in the morning if he were very ill; if not, to stay till Monday. He returned early yesterday, and brought me an account, which led me to fear, that, though I travelled with all the speed a postchaise could give, I should scarcely find

him alive. I came with a heavy heart: but, I am happy to say, the continuance of immediate alarm had been short; and, as I drew near Aston, I met with one or two persons who gave me a more favourable account than I had anticipated. I found him, indeed, in an exceedingly weak state, but free from the extreme agitation which he laboured under during the day and night of Saturday, owing to the violence of the fever. Symptoms, I think, are on the whole improving, but I cannot feel very sanguine hopes of his ultimate recovery.

“ My visit certainly is very painful; yet at the same time very gratifying: for it has removed the distressing feeling I had about the state of his mind. His gloom, of which I had heard a good deal in an indistinct manner, by no means relates to the prospects which lie before him. He is perfectly calm and cheerful in the view of dissolution; and seems disappointed at the symptoms of recovery. He thought his trials were almost over; and said, that yesterday morning he had hoped to end the sacred services of the day in heaven. Indeed his wish is, decidedly, *to depart*, in the confidence that he shall *be with Christ, which is far better*. His dejection is manifestly nothing more than the feeling of a mind exhausted by its own exertions: for, owing to his deafness, he has none of that refreshment which others feel from conversation; so that the amusements of his mind are, in fact, equal to the mental exertions of most men. His feelings on Sunday were very distressing both to himself and others, and were clearly aggravated by a degree of delirium, arising from fever. Yesterday and to-day he has been quite calm, and, though too weak

to speak much, is evidently in a tranquil state.—I brought my eldest boy with me, that he might once more see his grandfather, and receive his last blessing. He spoke to him for a few minutes this morning in a very affecting manner, and pronounced his blessing upon him, in a way which, I trust, he will never forget. May God grant, that he may walk in the steps which are leading his grandfather to glory!”

The day on which this letter was written my youngest brother arrived at Aston. For myself, a still more urgent call detained me from the scene, to which duty, as well as inclination, would otherwise have led me, and kept me at Hull more than a week longer. Almost daily letters, however, informed me of the state of things at Aston.

That of March 20 reported, that “scarcely a hope of recovery remained,” and complained still of gloom oppressing the revered sufferer’s mind. It added: “No doubt this dejection is occasioned, in great part, by disease, as it always comes on with the (daily) paroxysm of fever. His hope of final victory, indeed, seldom wavers. He may linger some time, and I do trust the sun of righteousness will yet shine upon him, and that we shall here witness his triumph: but, if not, faith will still behold him victorious over every enemy.”

The next day’s letter announced nothing new. The following, from my brother, was very gratifying.

“March 22, Thursday. I take up my pen with far greater pleasure to-day than I have before done, to write concerning my dear father. For, though I can say nothing at all favourable respecting his health, and indeed he appears to be approaching very near

his end, yet, thanks be to God, the clouds which overspread his mind are breaking away, and he talks with a placidity and cheerfulness greater than I have before seen since I came.—He passed a very distressing night, owing to the degree of debility induced by the feverish paroxysm of yesterday: indeed I much doubted whether he would live till morning. The symptoms have, however, become more mild; and this morning he rose above his feelings of bodily uneasiness and mental depression, and seemed to *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*.

“Just as we had assembled for family worship, he sent to say, that he wished us to meet in his room, and join with him in the Lord’s supper, as a means of grace, through which he might receive that consolation which he was seeking. It is utterly impossible to describe the deeply interesting and affecting scene. The whole family (with one exception,) and an old parishioner were present. The fervour displayed by my dear father, his poor emaciated form, the tears and sobs of all present, were almost more than I could bear, with that degree of composure, which was requisite to enable me to read the service so as to make him hear. In the midst of the service he fell back, as if expiring; and for a moment I thought he had departed: but he revived again. The scene was trying: but it was a delightful feeling, and has done more to cheer our downcast hearts than can well be conceived. I could not but feel reminded in this sacrament of what is said of the passover in the time of Josiah, (2 Kings xxiii. 22.) *Surely there was not holden such another*. It seems moreover to have been quite a cordial to my father’s spirits, who

adopted on the occasion the words of the venerable Simeon in the prospect of dissolution. He is now quite calm and like himself; and can clearly discern that much of his previous uncomfortable state of mind was merely the effect of fever.

“ During a period of great distress from this cause yesterday afternoon, he sent for me for the purpose of mentioning ‘ something of a worldly nature.’ I expected, of course, that he had some communication to make respecting the arrangement of his affairs. But, to my no small surprise, he said, It was time for planting his usual crop of potatoes for the poor; and he begged that I and my brother would take steps for doing it, in a manner best calculated to secure the benefit to those for whom it was intended, after his decease!—Here was an instance of ‘ the ruling passion strong in death,’ such as, I think, has not very often been seen.”

The “ ruling passion ” may be considered as, in this instance, combining two ingredients, the love of gardening, and a “ care for the poor,” which led my father to turn every nook of waste land to account, for their benefit.

This evening his son in law, the Rev. S. King, joined the party at Aston, from London, where he had been detained by the threatening illness of his own father. This we shall find hereafter alluded to.

My sister’s letter of the next day was as follows :

“ March 23. Our beloved father still lives, but cannot, we conceive, continue many hours. All yesterday, and through the night, he remained in so blessed a state of mind, that our joy and gratitude almost swallowed up every other feeling.”—Some

sentences expressive of great joy and confidence are then reported, which will afterwards occur among the memorandums taken at the time; and it is added: "Ere long, however, a slight flush on his cheek made us fear that the fever was returning; and our fears were soon realized. The paroxysm came on with great violence, and with it that confusion and gloom, which are so distressing to himself and to us. He is more calm now, though in a state of extreme suffering. He longs for his release, and says, 'All will be well at last.' Great submission to God is displayed throughout, and *Thou art righteous* is his language. We are greatly agitated between painful and pleasant feelings: but I trust God is with us. The scene is instructive beyond expression: and I have felt my faith so confirmed, that I can hardly help imagining it will never more be shaken. We try to note down what we can; but who can describe *the look, the manner?* . . . .

"P. S. Afternoon. Dr. Slater is here, and my father has talked with amazing energy, and a most minute remembrance of all that has passed. Dr. S. can hardly think his end is *very near*."

Dr. Slater of Wycombe is the physician here repeatedly referred to; who, on these and many other occasions, visited my father, at the distance of twenty miles, as, strictly speaking, a "professional *friend*;" without any other remuneration than that which his generous and ardent mind derived from ministering to one whom he revered and loved.

On Saturday, March 24, my sister wrote again: "Our beloved father still lives, in great suffering, but in a state of mind, which, though varying, is



highly delightful to all who witness it. I am so grieved that you are deprived of this consolation, which at times seems to raise us above every painful feeling, that I am determined to attempt copying some things which we have noted down, during the last few days, though aware that they will give you little idea indeed of what has passed."—These memorandums will appear hereafter. In conclusion she adds: "To-day he is free from fever, and in such a state, that, were he younger, there would be little doubt of his recovery. But we dare not entertain such an idea. He greatly longs to depart, and is disquieted at the thought of what really is not very improbable, a lingering illness. His constitution is wonderful. . . . I have given you some of our dear father's words: but the *way* in which they were spoken is beyond all description."

The same day a letter to the Rev. D. Wilson observes: "He has, with one or two exceptions, had a violent paroxysm of fever every day for a fortnight." And, after reporting his remark on Mr. W.'s message to him, which will be noticed hereafter, proceeds: "Humility is conspicuous in him to a surprising degree, united with a most deep sense of the awful responsibility which rests on him, in consequence of his having written so much on such important subjects."

Monday's letter only reports him "much weaker in body, but more calm in mind; anxious for departure, but yet willing to stay if he might do any spiritual good to any one."

On Tuesday, March 27, my brother wrote as follows: "Our dear father appeared all yesterday

evening in a very tranquil state, and slept much; but expecting that he should not live through the night. About half past two this morning Mr. Dawes went to him, and found that he had slept comfortably. His pulse was then only eighty in the minute. He went to him again at half past six, and was astonished to find that it had risen to one hundred and fifty-six! and was very feeble, fluttering, and irregular: in short, every symptom almost portended a speedy dissolution, and all the family were collected in the room expecting his departure. But a cordial draught had the effect of relieving the urgent symptoms; and, in consequence of this little revival, we have been favoured, yet exquisitely wounded, with a number of most touching expressions of his affectionate regard; and have gained a very interesting view of the state of his mind. What we can hear him say, while sitting by his bed-side, has reminded me of an operation said to have been lately performed in France, by which, a part of the ribs being removed, it was discovered that the pericardium in the living subject is transparent, and the whole heart was seen performing all its functions. You will understand the application of this, from the expression of one of his truly affectionate servants: ‘Oh, what a comfort it is, that my master *thinks aloud*.’—His desires after spiritual enjoyments appear unbounded; and he cannot be fully satisfied, because he cannot enjoy on earth what belongs only to heaven.

“He sleeps a good deal this morning: but we see, or think we see, the rapid approaches of death; so that I should not wonder, if before the post-hour I should have to announce to you, that the Lord has

heard his prayers, and given him a release from all his troubles and sufferings. Indeed, humanly speaking, this would have taken place long ere this time had it not been for the exceedingly great and unremitting attention of Mr. Dawes who has watched him by night as well as by day, and, in a most skilful manner, applied every palliative, which the nature of the case could admit. I cannot but look on it, as a very merciful interposition of providence, that, at a period of life when my father wanted the active attendance of a young person, and all his own children were removed from him, such a one was found to supply our place. Dawes, indeed, seems to love him as if he were one of his own children: or, if there be (as indeed there must be) the absence of the *peculiar* feelings of natural affection, that very circumstance better qualifies him for the kind office which he has sustained during this trying season; by enabling him to apply his judgment to the case, with somewhat more coolness than we could have done, even had we possessed equal skill."

The circumstance noticed in this letter, and on which both my brother and the domestic congratulate themselves, was very much owing to the deafness of my dear father, which led him to express audibly whatever passed in his mind, almost without being aware of it.

The latter part of the letter, I have thought it due to the affection and the services of a very promising young man to insert. Mr. W. R. Dawes, who has been already alluded to as first my father's pupil, and subsequently his literary assistant, has for some time past regularly devoted himself to the medical pro-

fession, with every prospect of credit to himself and advantage to others; and his residence in the house was no doubt a great comfort and assistance both to the venerable sufferer, and his mourning family, during the scenes which these letters describe.

This evening, the Rev. T. Webster arrived, to take a last farewell of his uncle.

The account sent me the next day was very gratifying, but I was not in Hull to receive it. Having been released by a change of circumstances at home, I that day set out for Aston, where I arrived the next evening. Still, however, communications were continued to the absent members of the family, and to some friends, which will furnish me with further extracts. My sister's letter of this day (Wednesday, March 28,) contained the following sentences:

“Our beloved father is still with us; and, did not his pulse indicate approaching dissolution, we should scarcely think it possible that a dying man could speak and think with the energy and clearness he does. O that you were here! How would it rejoice your heart to witness his calm and heavenly spirit; his humility, faith, tenderness, and love. He seems the most like his Saviour of any mortal I ever beheld: yet, still longing for more holiness. Never, indeed, will he be satisfied till he enters the realms of eternal bliss.—The agitation of mind, under which he did labour, we trust, is finally dispersed. He sometimes expresses a fear of the last struggle: yet, in general, speaks of it with composure and confidence. I cannot tell you how our dread of separation from him is increased, since he has shown such tender affection, and has become so

ready to talk to us all. . . . But I trust God will support us, and that we shall all derive great and lasting benefit from the scene passing before us."

Friday, March 30, I thus made my report of the state in which I found things :

" It was not till some hours after my arrival that I could conveniently see my dear father, as he was, and had been through the day, in a slumbering state ; and, as an accession of fever was then coming on, it was desirable that he should be kept quiet. He had expressed a fear, that, if I came, it would add to his troubles, by producing anxiety for *you* ; and, when I saw him, he asked, with whom I had left you in charge.

" His illness has been quite extraordinary for one of his age, and so much reduced : the fever has been so violent—his colour, at times, almost resembling mahogany—and his pulse from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and seventy. Dr. Slater has said, since Tuesday in last week, that he could do nothing for his restoration. He says himself, that the powers of animal life feel undiminished, and he rather dreads lying long in this state.—Being under the influence of fever last night, he had lost sight of the joyful feelings and exulting expressions of which you have been informed, and was but gloomy. He had a tolerably quiet night, and was this morning more free from fever, but looked very deathlike. His language was more cheerful, and his prayers of an elevated kind ; as ' that he might be one of those in whom *Christ should come to be glorified in that day,* &c.—He rather triumphed in the birth of our little girl, and implored blessings on ' his twenty-one

grandchildren.' He speaks, from time to time, more impressively, and with more animation, to his grandson Thomas, than to almost any one else. But he says less than he has done, and is more disposed to slumber. . . . Poor Betty Moulder looks confidently past all present sufferings, and past the remainder of her own prospects in this life, to the event of re-joining him in glory. She very simply and fervently said to him the other day, 'O, sir, when I get to heaven, and have seen Jesus Christ, the very next person I shall ask for will be you!'"

I continue my extracts, and shall have need to make very little addition to them.

April 1st, Sunday. "The day before yesterday my father seemed very weak and sinking, and we thought he would not live through the night: but yesterday he was stronger, and to day is better, I think, than on Friday. Upon the whole, he has been more cheerful."

April 3d, Tuesday. "Several fresh and unfavourable symptoms have appeared—a degree of diarrhœa, which cannot be checked, and some spots upon the feet which threaten mortification. He is, indeed, a pitiable object of weakness and suffering: but his mind is, in most respects vigorous, and his memory quick and correct. His paroxysms of fever have not lately come on as they did, and his mind has in consequence been more calm and peaceful: but his pulse has maintained the extraordinary height I before mentioned—one hundred and seventy. It is most edifying to observe his solemn earnestness, profound humility, cleaving to Christ alone, and fervent love and kindness to all about him. His atten-

tion to the feelings of every body is surprising and beautiful. His extreme deafness is a sad obstruction, and causes him to be left almost to his own resources. We can attempt little by address to him: but he most kindly receives any hint which one suggests by shouting in his ear. He has dreaded living long under increasing suffering, lest this should lead him to impatience. The other night, when he asked under these apprehensions, 'When will this end?' I replied, laying my head down by his, 'In God's good time.' 'Ah,' he said, 'that is a good expression—God's *good* time: I thank you for it:' and he had dwelt upon it ever since, and mentioned it almost every time I have seen him."

To the Rev. D. Wilson, April 5th, Thursday.  
"My very dear friend, I have now been here a week, watching over the dying bed of my dear honoured father, and daily expecting his dissolution. It is a deeply affecting and edifying scene; and what passed before I could come, was, I suppose, more interesting still. In every thing but comfort his state is even *sublimely Christian*. Such an awful sense of eternal things, of the evil of sin, and of the holiness of God—such profound self-abasement—such cleaving unto Christ alone—such patience, resignation, and unlimited submission to the will of God—such a constant spirit of fervent prayer—such pouring forth of blessings on all around him—with such minute and tender attention to all their feelings—it is truly admirable to behold. His state is bright in every one's view but his own. To his own apprehension, he in great measure *walks in darkness*. I have myself scarcely witnessed a gleam of *joy*. His habitual

temper is rather that which the words of Job describe, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*—This is often painful, sometimes it is discouraging to our feelings: yet, we are sensible that there is a call upon us for unbounded gratitude and praise.

“ Indeed, it cannot be wondered at, that my dear father should have much to contend with, considering how his mind has been absolutely worn down by labour, without intermission or recreation—the extraordinary fact of his pulse having been now for ten days at one hundred and seventy—and his deafness, which almost entirely shuts him up, and leaves him to his own resources. We cannot pray with him, to make him hear. Thrice, indeed, he has received the sacrament, with edifying and most affecting solemnity; and then, from his knowledge of the words, aided by painful vociferation on the part of the person officiating, he could follow the service. One of these occasions was succeeded with blessed relief and comfort to his mind: but, as he says, *the clouds return after the rain.*—I am very shy of addressing one, to whom I so much look up: but occasionally the attempt to convey to his ear some sentence of God’s word has succeeded; and it is so kindly and thankfully received as is very affecting. But we are obliged to keep, on these occasions, almost entirely to first principles; such as the coming of the sinner to the Saviour. . . . A great part of his time he has prayed and thought aloud, as insensible of the presence of any fellow creature; and the train of his thoughts, thus discovered, has been striking, and often highly elevated. Thus: ‘Posthumous reputation! the veriest bubble with which the devil ever



deluded a wretched mortal. But posthumous *usefulness*,—in that there is indeed something. 'That was what Moses desired, and Joshua, and David, and the prophets; the apostles also, Peter, and Paul, and John; and most of all the Lord Jesus Christ.'—Again: 'O Lord, abhor me not—though I be indeed *abhorrible*, and abhor myself! Say not, Thou filthy soul, continue *filthy still*: but rather say, *I will, be thou clean!*' "

April 9th, Monday. "The only fresh symptom is great drowsiness, which is thought some indication of effusion on the brain; the effect of which might be expected to be stupor and insensibility: and his continuance would then, probably, not be long. He greatly needs the pity and prayers of you all, and earnestly asks them."

April 11th, Wednesday. "My dear father still continues, and, I hope, suffers less, though he grows much weaker. Thank God, his gloom seems very much to have dispersed. 'I have not,' he lately said, 'that fear of death which I had.' (Qu. of the act of dying?) And yesterday: 'I find myself much more able *to approach unto God* than I was: but such a sense of unworthiness and defilement, as I cannot express.'—On parting with us last night, he said, 'God knows how well I love you all: but I have *no* wish to see any of you again in this world. Do not think this cruel.' "

My brothers had been obliged to return to their respective homes on Tuesday, and did not reach Aston again till after his death.

To the Rev. Dr. Ryland, Bristol, Friday, April 13. —"I am happy to say, as his weakness increases, I

hope his positive suffering is habitually less; and his mind appears generally calm and cheerful. He says very little; but what he does drop is of a gratifying kind.—On the whole, his closing scene, notwithstanding these passing clouds, is evidently worthy of his Christian character and hopes: and we have great cause to bless God without ceasing, on his behalf. Certainly we ought also to be much edified and excited by what we witness.—At times he expresses considerable apprehension of the pang of death itself. I hope, in this his fears may prove groundless. I am sure your prayers for him will not be wanting while he continues; and when any change takes place we will not fail to inform you.”

At seven o'clock in the evening of Monday, April 16th, I wrote to my daughter, at Hull, as follows:

“Half an hour ago, your dear blessed grandpapa *ceased to breathe*. It was literally this and no more. Thus has he eventually been spared even the *least* object of his fear. His mind had been peaceful and happy of late. Oh how peaceful does he now look! Not a groan, not a sigh escaped him at the end. We are as composed as could be expected.—But I can hardly save the post.—May our last end be like his!”

The next day allowed a more particular account of the closing scene to be given, than either the time or the circumstances would permit that evening.

April 17th, Tuesday. “For two days my dear father coughed almost incessantly, though not violently; which was accompanied with frequent expectoration. But on Saturday this almost entirely ceased. In consequence an increased difficulty of breathing succeeded, and we feared suffocation might take place.”

On Sunday night he was very ill, so as to make us apprehend his death was at hand. Yesterday morning he was, for a time, a good deal better: but the oppression returned and increased. Nothing immediate was anticipated, when his death actually approached. I had taken a walk, and on my return visited his chamber. We then all came down to tea; in the course of which it was remarked, that it did not seem quite well for him to be left attended only by a servant, as her grief appeared to distress him. I said, I would go up immediately. I did so: but Dawes had anticipated me. He had found my father worse, dismissed the servant, and was supporting him, nearly in an erect posture, upon his arm. I said, 'This surely cannot last long:' and D. replied, 'Not through the night, I think.' I looked in his face, and saw his eyes in some degree turn upwards, which I pointed out to D., (who was rather behind him,) and he immediately said, 'You had better tell those who wish to see him again to come.' I did so in a calm manner, and went before them. He was sinking as quietly as an infant dropping asleep, and with a beautiful look of composure. My mother and sister wished to come in, and, on my saying there was nothing to shock them, they did so. We all looked on for a minute or two, while the last respirations quietly ebbed away—so to speak. So far from feeling shocked, it was a relief to all our minds to see such suffering, and such labour as his breathing had been, subside into such sweet peace and ease.—He had been peaceful and happy, on the whole, for several days; and on Sunday, and on the morning of Monday, had said some delightful things. His mind was clear to

the last moment; and, I believe, in the article of death itself, he suffered much less than for many hours, or even days before. The last effort which he made was to stretch out his hand to his servant, when she was about to leave the room. A very little time before he had affectionately shaken hands with me.—He had been shaved only two hours and a half before his death, and at that time he opened his shirt-neck, and put all out of the way for the operation.

“ Thus all that he has taught and done is *sealed* by his dying testimony, and his dying example. *No blot* can now come upon it from him; which was so long and so much the object of his prayers. Blessed be God!—More heavenly dispositions, surely, could not be exhibited than prevailed in him throughout his illness, even when he *walked in darkness*.—Not one of all his fears has been realized: indeed, they all vanished away one by one. The last which he expressed, was, on Friday, of the agony of death: but where was the agony to *him*? Peace, peace, perfect peace! All our hopes have been exceeded. The close has been a cordial to us all: and how substantial the comfort! The constant prevalence of such tempers, under the most trying of circumstances,—how much superior an evidence is this, to any degree of confidence *unsupported* by even a like measure of *meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light!* . . . . He was pouring out his blessings and prayers for the dear children to a very late period; particularly on Sunday night, (though so *very* ill,) when reminded that it was Jane’s birthday.”

The following is the account of the same event fur-

nished to Mr. Wilson by the faithful and affectionate young friend, in whose arms my father expired :

“ One of his last efforts was to give his hand to his weeping servant ; which was a beautiful evidence that the tender attention to the feelings of those around him, which marked his whole illness, continued to form a prominent feature in his state of mind even to the last. After this, which took place about five minutes before his death, he appeared to be lost in prayer ; but, just at the moment when he reclined his head on my breast, the expression of his countenance suddenly changed from that of prayer, and indicated, as I conceived, a transition to feelings of admiring and adoring praise, with a calmness and peace which are quite inexpressible. The idea strongly impressed upon my mind was, that the veil which intercepts eternal things from *our* view was removed, and that, like Stephen, he saw things invisible to mortal eye.”

Since these pages were prepared for the press, another account of the closing scene, drawn up by my sister, only as a private memorandum, has come into my hands, and I feel unwilling to withhold it.

“ On the evening of Sunday his breath became dreadfully oppressed, and we stood by in great alarm and distress, witnessing his agonies. He was delightfully calm and tenderly affectionate : desired us to go to supper, as we needed refreshment, and gave us his parting blessing. He said to me, ‘ Give my dying blessing to your husband, and his father and mother.’

“ He however revived again, and on Monday seemed rather better ; though his inability to throw off the

phlegm, which accumulated in great quantities, convinced us that his end was approaching.

“ On Mr. D.’s feeling his pulse, he inquired, ‘ Any change? Any token for good?’—so he called the symptoms of approaching dissolution. Mr. D. answered, ‘ I think you are not so ill as you were in the morning.’ ‘ Very well,’ was his reply: ‘ Thy will, O Lord, be done!’

“ About the middle of the day, fever again came on, and he appeared restless and distressed. He said, ‘ Some hours this morning passed *very comfortably*. It was something like godliness: but now my mind is confused, and I cannot fix my thoughts.’ His breath in the afternoon became short, and his sufferings appeared great; but on my mother’s lamenting his distress in breathing, he said, ‘ It is by no means so great as last night.’—Frequently during the preceding week, when we thought him dying, he had said, laying his hand on his chest, ‘ Nothing fails *here*: I may live weeks as I now am.’ But for the last day or two he had perceived a difference in this respect, and often noticed it, saying, ‘ *Here* it is: the oppression is dreadful! Lord support me! Receive my spirit!’—About four or five o’clock the flush left his face, and he became calm, and again able to resume his constant work of prayer and praise. He, however, spoke little to be understood, but his hands and eyes were continually lifted up to heaven. He occasionally looked round upon us with unutterable tenderness and affection; though sometimes with a mixture of reproach when he witnessed our tears. His countenance expressed what he had said to my mother a day or two before: ‘ Can any rational being grieve at my

departure? If you thought I was going to be miserable, you might mourn; but surely not as it is.' On her reply, that she could not help it, he said, 'Nature *will* have its first burst of sorrow: but you will soon learn to view the subject in its true light.'

“ He seemed about half past six almost disquieted by seeing the bitter distress of a servant who sat by him, and repeatedly shook his head as a sign that she should moderate her grief. As her feelings became ungovernable, she rose to leave the room: which when he perceived, he made an attempt to take his hand out of bed, to give her before she went: but his weakness prevented his succeeding. It was his last effort. He soon after made a sign to Mr. D. to raise his head. Mr. D. took him in his arms; he laid his head on his shoulder, and raised his eyes to heaven: a look of unutterable joy, an expression of glory begun, came over his whole countenance, and in a few minutes, without sigh or struggle, without even a discomposed feature, he sweetly *slept in Jesus*. We all, even my poor mother, stood by and were *comforted*. We could hardly conceive it could be death; and when assured by Mr. D., who still held him in his arms, that the heart had ceased to beat, our first words were praise and thanksgiving to that God, who had delivered him from every fear, from all evil, and received him to his eternal kingdom and glory.—We soon indeed awoke to the sense of our own irreparable loss. To the end of life we must mourn such a wise counsellor, bright example, and fervent intercessor. Yet never can we think of him without blessing and praising God on his behalf, for all he did *for* him and *by* him; for having so long

preserved to us such a treasure; even till, we humbly trust, that we through grace have a blessed hope of all being at length re-united with him in the realms of endless bliss!

“It is not easy to describe the deep grief of his people, when the mournful event was made known in the village and neighbourhood. ‘Our *friend* is gone!’ ‘We have lost our *friend*!’ were the lamentations of the poor on every side. Even the most stupid and thoughtless of his parishioners were roused to feeling on this occasion. Numbers of the parish and neighbourhood came to take a last look, and stood by the corpse overwhelmed with grief,—many of whom had paid little attention to his instructions while living.”

Mr. Wilson remarks:—“Upon such a departure no feeling but that of gratitude and joy can arise in the Christian’s breast, unless perhaps a momentary regret should cross the mind for the extremity of suffering which our friend was called to endure. But that will soon subside into submission, when we recollect the calmness with which the blessed apostle in our text speaks of his own still more violent death. For the Christian will behold in both, not so much the external circumstances or the personal anguish, as the principle on which they were supported, and the acceptance with which they were crowned. Yes, my brethren, the dissolution of our venerable friend, though not, like the inspired apostle’s, a martyrdom for the cause of Christ, in which he poured out his blood as a libation; yet, so far as intense sufferings from the ordinary attacks of disease, and the super-added assaults of Satan, gave him the occasion of



testifying his faith and patience, of confirming his fidelity to Christ, of displaying for the instruction and encouragement of the surviving church, a most affecting scene of a dying disciple adhering to his Saviour under the bitterest temptations and most oppressive conflicts, and then falling asleep with peace and resignation; his death was a sacred act, the consummation of his devotedness to God. And his composure, not only in contemplating his departure when near, but in enduring it and supporting it when it arrived, surrounded as it was with circumstances calculated to dismay an ordinary faith, formed a striking exemplification of the Christian fortitude which is so nobly evinced by the blessed apostle in the triumphant passage we have been considering."

The funeral took place on the Monday following, April 23. It was our purpose to act strictly according to his own directions, by making it as plain and private as possible. But, as the hour approached, numbers of those who had enjoyed his acquaintance, with many others who "esteemed him highly in love for his work's sake,"—some of them coming from a very considerable distance,—began to collect around the church and the parsonage house. On the procession leaving the garden gate, it was attended by sixteen clergymen; while thirty or forty respectable females, in full mourning, stood ready, in double line, to join it as it passed towards the church. That little building was more crowded, probably, than on any former occasion; and a large number of persons collected round the windows, unable to enter for want of room. In the absence of the Rev. J. H.

Barber, (the present rector,) who had been disappointed of arriving in time, the funeral service was read by the Rev. S. B. Mathews, curate of Stone. The Rev. John Hill, vice-principal of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, addressed the congregation, previously to the interment, from the words of dying Jacob, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!" and the very appropriate hymn was sung, beginning,

"In vain my fancy strives to paint  
The moment after death," &c.

Mr. Wilson's funeral sermon was preached on the Friday following. It was our intention, and very much our wish, that it should have been delivered from the same pulpit, whence the venerated servant of Christ, whose removal gave occasion to it, had for eighteen years, "declared the whole counsel of God:" but it was foreseen that the little church of Aston would be utterly inadequate to receive the numbers who would desire to be present. The neighbouring church of Haddenham therefore, which had been kindly offered, was thankfully, though, at the same time, somewhat reluctantly accepted for the service. The event showed the necessity of making the exchange; for even that large building was not sufficient to accommodate the crowds who assembled. The appearance of the congregation, in which a large proportion of all ranks had provided themselves with mourning, evinced how highly my dear father was esteemed in the neighbourhood; though his infirmities and engagements had conspired for a long time past to confine him within the limits of his own village.

Before I proceed to other documents, I will lay

before the reader a few short extracts of letters from different members of the family, showing the view which they took of the whole scene, in proportion as they were enabled to look back upon it more deliberately, and with greater composure.

April 20. "We feel that we have had a grand and most edifying Christian spectacle proposed to us: far more striking and instructive than if all had been smooth."

April 25. "It was a great fear of my dear father's that his death-bed scene should depress any of us, particularly myself. How much otherwise has been the effect! I do confess that the contemplation of the whole, in all its connexions, produces such an effect that I *cannot* feel depressed at present."—The letter in reply to which this was written, had brought some painful intelligence.—"After seeing fears so disappointed, (if I may use the expression,) and prayers so answered, I cannot but indulge hope."

May 29. "When I dare to recal past scenes, I hope I do it with much praise and thankfulness, mingled with my sorrow: and I really do think, that even the most painful part of your beloved father's experience affords matter rather of gratitude than of grief. As I observed before, it reminded me of a fine sunset, heightened by the dark and gloomy clouds tinted with gold; and I certainly think the scene afforded more to warn, excite, and interest us, than a serene and unclouded one would have done.—Some of our best feelings were, I trust, drawn out on this most melancholy and affecting occasion, and our hearts still more than before united in tender affection."

June 2. "I remain in a very debilitated state. . . . My mind too, after all its over-excitement at Aston, has sunk almost into what the doctors call a *collapsed* state; and it seems sometimes as torpid as its companion. I do not, however, mean by this to say, that the effects of what I have so lately witnessed and experienced have entirely subsided. I would not thus undervalue the goodness of God; who, by means of the bereavement we have lately sustained, and all its attendant circumstances, has done me, I would fain hope, permanent good.—I often look back with joy and gratitude to our delightful meeting; for delightful certainly it was, though mingled with such exquisite pain. Surely it was a foretaste of that time, when, I humbly trust, we shall all be re-united in the realms of eternal bliss!—You ask for my now calmer reflections: but I cannot yet think calmly on what has passed. My heart overflows with a strange mixture of feelings, whenever my thoughts turn that way. Those of a joyful nature, however, predominate. The amazing goodness of God to me and mine—our past happiness—our future prospects—at times quite overpower my mind, and I seem almost lost in 'wonder, love, and praise.'—But I am afraid of yielding to these happy emotions, lest they should not rest on a secure foundation, as regards myself: and yet perhaps a merciful God bestows them, as a cordial to support me under my depressing maladies; and ought I to turn away from the cup of consolation which he so graciously puts into my hand, unworthy as I am of the least of his mercies?—Many things which passed have led me to a more constant and careful perusal of

the Bible than formerly: and most richly have I been rewarded by such views of *the wondrous things of God's law*, as I never before enjoyed."

August 2. "Whenever I contemplate his close, I seem to derive from it a deeper conviction of the importance and excellence of religion, and of the *vast hold* it had upon his mind."

I shall only now detain the reader from the memorandums which were made of what fell from my father's lips during his illness, while I submit some extracts and remarks on that degree of darkness and depression, which was intermingled with sensations of a different kind in his experience at this time.

In a letter, dated February 21, before the commencement of my father's illness, Mr. Richardson, of York, had remarked generally, referring to him, "Deep thinkers, and highly gifted persons, are seldom favoured with such joy and peace in believing as are experienced by common minds. Men must always pay the penalty annexed to pre-eminence above their fellows."

The following were the reflections made upon the subject of his conflicts of this kind, in the obituary published in the *Christian Observer*, soon after his decease:

"Under all the circumstances of such a case, to have expected that Mr. Scott's mind should be kept uniformly cheerful, and filled with bright anticipations, would not only have been to expect little less than a miracle, but would have shown a defective acquaintance with the operations of the human mind, and with God's dealings with his most established and

matured servants. The sagacious and observant Bunyan took a different view of things; and accordingly he represents his more experienced *Christian* as encountering, on his first entrance into 'the river,' and in some parts of his passage, a degree of darkness and apprehension, from which the younger disciple, *Hopeful*, is mercifully exempted. Is not this natural, and supported by facts?<sup>1</sup> The deeper views which such characters have taken of sin; the profounder sense they have of their own unworthiness; their more awful impressions of eternity; the apprehensions with which long experience has inspired them of the deceitfulness of the human heart; and the ideas which both scripture and fact have taught them of the power and malice of evil spirits; all conspire to this end. Moreover, it is a common observation, that where (as in the case of Abraham,) Almighty God has communicated strong faith, he subjects it to severe trials. If any can conceive of nothing superior to present comfort, to them this may be puzzling; but it need not be so to others. The result, in such cases, proves honourable to God, and edifying to his saints. What tried and tempted spirit, for example, has not been animated in its conflicts by the exclamation wrung from holy Job, *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.*

"Though, however, Mr. Scott passed through *deep waters*, and sometimes *walked in darkness* (Isa. l. 10.) during his last illness, it is not to be supposed that this was his constant, or even his habitual situation; much less that fear of the final event prevailed

<sup>1</sup> The reader may be referred to Mr. Scott's own observations on the passage of the Pilgrim's Progress alluded to.

in him. No : hope as to that point generally predominated, though he would say, ‘ Even one fear, *where infinity is at stake*, is sufficient to countervail all its consoling effects.’ But the present conflict was severe : and his holy soul could conceive of many evils, short of the failure of final salvation, from which he shrunk back with horror. There can be no doubt that these distressing feelings were much connected with the disease under which he laboured, as they increased and abated again with the paroxysms of his fever : yet, with the scriptures in our hands, we cannot hesitate to concur in his judgment, that the malignant powers of darkness took advantage of this, in a peculiar manner, to harass and distress him. From time to time, however, the clouds dispersed, and the *sun of righteousness arose upon him with healing in his beams.*

In the third edition of his funeral sermons, Mr. Wilson has added the following note upon the subject of my father’s sufferings, both mental and bodily :

“ The remarkable sufferings of so eminent a saint, in his last sickness, may perhaps at first perplex the mind of a young Christian. But such a person should remember that the way to heaven is ordinarily a way of tribulation ; and that the greatest honour God puts on his servants is, to call them to such circumstances of affliction as display and manifest his grace. What would have crushed a weak and unstable penitent, with immature knowledge of the promises of salvation, only illustrated the faith of the venerable subject of these discourses. God adapts the burden to the strength.—As to the anguish and

darkness which at times rested on his mind, they were clearly the combined effects of disease and of the temptations of the adversary. The return of comfort, as his fever remitted, made this quite certain; and he was himself able at times to make the distinction. But even in the midst of his afflictive feelings, it is manifest to every real judge of such a case, that a living and strong faith was in vigorous activity. Almost every expression detailed by me, is an expression of this principle. For consolation is one thing, faith another. This latter grace often lays hold of the promises made in Christ with the firmest grasp, at the very time when hope and comfort are interrupted by the morbid state of the bodily and mental powers. Our feelings and frames, thank God, are not the foundation on which we build. Never perhaps was stronger faith exhibited even by our Saviour himself, than when he uttered those piercing words, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

“ But it may be further remarked, that very important ends were doubtless to be answered by these sufferings, not only to the church generally, as I have already observed, but to the venerable sufferer himself. Possibly his extraordinary talents, his extensive success, his long and familiar acquaintance with all the topics of theology, his surprising influence over a wide circle of readers, may have required this last struggle to check every remaining tendency to self-elevation, and make him feel more deeply than ever, what he confessed through life in so unfeigned a manner, that he was in himself nothing but a most guilty and unworthy sinner.



“ If, however, any difficulty remains, it is more than sufficient to say, that it is our duty to resolve such cases into the unerring wisdom and good pleasure of God. We know nothing. Our concern, both as to ourselves and others, is *to be dumb, and not open our mouths*, at what God does. Happy, infinitely happy, is it for us to know, that *all things work together for good to them that love God*, and that *no temptation will take us but what is common to man*; but that *God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able*; but will *with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it*.

“ Of the glory which follows, and swallows up all these temporary sufferings, I need not speak.”

In reviewing Mr. W.'s sermons, the Christian Observers remark on the specimens which Mr. W. supplied of my father's dying expressions: “ They convey to our minds the most unequivocal testimony of a frame of mind the best suited to his circumstances, the most acceptable to God, and the most cheering to those deeply interested in his eternal welfare. It is perfectly true that indications of deep thought—of occasional perturbation—of an anxious searching, and launching forward, as it were, into the depths and obscurities of futurity—and of the heavy pressure of sin on the conscience, discover themselves in his dying declarations. It is perfectly true also that some clouds occasionally interposed, and veiled to his sinking eye, for the moment, the glories of the invisible world. It is true, that his dying scene presents to us an individual walking rather in the twilight of enjoyment, where the sun and the shade

were struggling together for victory, than in a region of unmixed happiness. But are not such thoughts and anxieties the natural accompaniments of every step of our pilgrimage; and, if finally dispersed by the light of faith, and hope, and Christian joy, does not their presence supply even a stronger evidence, to the bystander, of the safety of the individual, than their absence? Undisturbed serenity may be undisturbed delusion. A calm after anxiety is a victory after the battle—is the ‘palm’ when the battle is won. And such was the case of Mr. Scott. . . .

“To ourselves nothing can be more satisfactory than these extracts. They afford a close parallel to one of the most exquisitely affecting death-bed scenes presented to us in the annals of the church of Christ—the death of Richard Hooker. They assure us that faith in the Redeemer is of power sufficient, not merely to perpetuate the repose of the already unruffled mind, or preserve the sunshine on which no clouds have gathered; but to calm the disquiet and to bind up the broken heart; to display to us, even when intensely occupied with the terrors of eternity, such visions of glory as shall gradually absorb our attention, disperse our fears, light up every dark spot in our hopes and enjoyments, and supply to the fainting soul large prelibations of the waters of life—of *the stream which maketh glad the city of God.*”

Finally, I would for myself avow, more strongly, if possible, than before, though without any design to retract or weaken the influence of what has been said on satanic agency, a firm conviction that the gloom, of which we speak, was, in the present instance, *mainly* to be attributed to the force of dis-

ease ; which has the power of producing such effects, and effects also of an opposite description, beyond what those who have not carefully considered the subject are at all aware. The following sentence is no doubt strictly true in both its parts: “ Good men may be unreasonably depressed and dejected, and bad men supported and elevated, under the near prospect of death, from the mere operation of natural causes.”<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the reader has been called to observe, and in what is to follow he will still further perceive, how large an intermixture there was of joyful, as well as of dejected sentiments, in the case before us.—I now insert the

## MEMORANDUMS

*made during my father's illness.*

In her letter of March 24, (above page 522,) my sister observes, “ The first days I was here I could do nothing but weep and pray.” Subsequently she says, “ At length, however, I was roused to the edifying nature of the scene, and to consider how beneficial the recollection of it might hereafter be to myself and others. This induced me to make some notes of what passed.”—These are as follows :

“ In the time of his darkness and gloom, he prayed without ceasing, and with inexpressible fervour. He seemed unconscious of any one being near him, and gave vent to the feelings of his mind without restraint. And, oh ! what holy feelings were they ;

<sup>1</sup> Pearson's Life of Hey.

what spirituality, what hatred of sin, what humility, what simple faith in Christ, what zeal for God's glory, what submission! Never could I hear him without being reminded of Him, who, *being in an agony, prayed the more earnestly*; and whose language was, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Nevertheless Thou continuest holy!* 'I think nothing,' he said, 'of my bodily pains: my soul is all. I trust all will end well; but it is a dreadful conflict. I hope—I fear—I tremble—I pray. Satan tries to be revenged on me, in this awful hour, for all that I have done against his kingdom through life. He longs to pluck me out of Christ's hand. Subdue the enemy, O Lord! Silence the accuser! *Bruise Satan under my feet SHORTLY!*

Hide me, O my Saviour hide,  
Till the storm of life is past,  
Safe into the haven guide,  
O receive my soul at last!  
Other refuge I have none!

—'Oh, to enter eternity with one doubt on the mind! *Eternity—Eternity—Eternity!*'—'People talk of *assurance* not being attainable in this world, nor perhaps much to be desired. They and the devil agree on this point.'—'Oh what a thing *sin* is!—*Who knoweth the power of His wrath?* If this be the way to heaven, what must the way to hell be? *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*'

“He mentioned the wonderful way in which his prayers for others had been answered; and seemed to

derive some comfort from the reflection. He thought he had failed less in the duty of *intercession* than in any other! <sup>1</sup>

“ He rejected every attempt to comfort him by reminding him of the way in which he had served and glorified God. ‘ Christ is ALL,’ he said: ‘ He is my *only* hope. Hide me, O my Saviour, &c.! Other refuge have I *none*,’ &c.

“ In the midst of his conflict he generally expressed hope of final victory, but thought he should die under a cloud. He accused himself of self-indulgence and slackness in prayer; of having made his religious labours an excuse for shortness in private devotion.

“ There was an astonishing absence of selfish feeling. Even in his worst hours he thought of the health of us all; observed if we sat up long, and insisted upon our retiring; and was much afraid of paining or hurting us in any way.

“ His wonderful knowledge of scripture was a source of great comfort, and the exactness with which he repeated passage after passage, frequently remarking upon emphatic words in the original, was amazing. The manner also in which he connected one with another was admirable. It resembled hearing a series of exquisitely selected scripture-references read with a solemnity and feeling such as one had never before witnessed.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps, when all circumstances are fully considered, there is not a sentence in these papers more remarkable than this: nor a fact in his history more indicative of his zeal for God and love to man, than that to which it relates. Who among us can make a similar declaration?

“ His first clear consolation was after receiving the Lord’s supper, on Thursday, March 22d. He had previously observed: ‘ An undue stress is by some laid upon this ordinance, as administered to the sick, and I think others of us are in danger of undervaluing it. It is a *means of grace*, and may prove God’s instrument of conveying to me the comfort I am seeking.’ The scene was indescribable, and can never be forgotten by any who witnessed it. His fervour, his humility, the way in which he raised his emaciated hands to heaven, his pallid dying countenance, so full of love, and expressive of every thing heavenly and holy, the tears and sobs of those present: all together were most overpowering. Surely God was with us in a peculiar manner. Shortly after the service was concluded, he said, ‘ *Now Lord lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*’ Through the remainder of the day, though much exhausted, and during the night, he continued in a very happy state of mind.

“ To his son in law, who came in the evening, and regretted his absence when the sacrament was administered, he said: ‘ It was *beneficial* to me: I received Christ, and he received me. I feel a composure which I did not expect last night: I have not *triumphant* assurance, but something which is more calm and satisfactory. I bless God for it.’ And then he repeated, in the most emphatic manner, the whole twelfth chapter of Isaiah: *O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me, &c.* ‘ Oh,’ said he, ‘ to realize the *fulness of joy!* to have done

with temptation! *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat: for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.—They are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God.*

Sin, my worst enemy before,  
 Shall vex my eyes and ears no more:  
 My inward foes shall all be slain,  
 Nor Satan break my peace again.

*We know not what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.—The righteous hath hope in his death. Not driven away; no, no, not driven away, as the wicked is.*

When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
 Bid my anxious fears subside!

Though painful at present,  
 'T will cease before long;  
 And then, oh how pleasant  
 The conqueror's song!

“ ‘What a mercy,’ he said, on something being prepared for him, ‘that there are so many *changes* of food for bad appetites; and so many kind relatives, friends, and domestics, doing all they can to help me. You are all trying to comfort me: God bless you, and all whom you desire to be blessed! He will be a God to Abraham, *and to his seed, and his seed's seed.*

*Let the children of thy servant continue, and their seed be established before thee!*

How would the powers of darkness boast  
If but one praying soul were lost!

He frequently repeated, '*Perfect peace!*'

"In the evening he asked Mr. Dawes if there was not a proof sheet that night, extending nearly to the close of St. John. And then, evidently going over in his mind the contents of the last chapters of that gospel, he said, '*Well: It is finished: We shall soon finish our work too.*' After a pause '*My Lord, and my God!*' and then, with great animation, '*These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through his name.*'—He again paused, and then proceeded: '*Lovest thou me?*' and, turning to his sons, '*It is too late to say to me, but he says to you, feed my sheep, feed my lambs. That is the way to show your love. I have endeavoured to do it, but it is all over now.*' Mr. D. said, '*Your works will furnish food for them for a long time to come:*' he replied, '*Aye, but they will get out of fashion.*' Mr. D. '*The Bible will not get out of fashion.*' '*But they will get a new-fashioned way of commenting upon it.*' Mr. D. said something further on the permanency of his comment. '*Pho,*' he cried with a semi-contemptuous smile; and added: '*Oh, you do not know what a proud heart I have, and how you help the devil. They may take a few hints, I hope. I leave something which they may have in remembrance after my decease, but*



oh!' with great solemnity, 'what an awful responsibility rests upon me! I have *done what I could*. Forgive—accept—bless!'

"He proceeded: 'There is one feeling I cannot have if I would. Those that oppose my doctrine have slandered me sadly: but I cannot feel any *resentment*. I can only love and pity them, and pray for their salvation. I never did feel any resentment against them: I only regret that I did not more ardently long and pray for the salvation of their souls.—I feel most earnest in prayer for the promotion of Christ's kingdom all over the earth. *Hallowed be thy name—Thy kingdom come—Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!—Be thou exalted, Lord in thy own strength; so will we sing and praise thy power.*—There are two causes in the world, the cause of God, and the cause of the devil; the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the cause of the devil. The cause of God *will* prevail all over the world, among *all kindreds, and people, and tongues*. It SHALL *fill the whole earth*. *Hallowed be thy name, &c.*'

"'I hope I leave something,' he said, referring to his writings, 'which may do good to the industrious; and *nothing* can do good to the idle.'

"He afterwards alluded with great concern to the death of his father. 'I fear he knew not *Immanuel, the Lord our righteousness*. 'Then to his grandson: 'You see your grandfather, I trust, die a more Christian death than his father: may you die a more Christian death than either grandfather or great grandfather! To this end lead

a more Christian life. You have greater advantages than they had. You have been *planted in the courts of the Lord*: but oh!’ (raising his emaciated hands with amazing energy,) ‘*despise not the birth-right; lest afterwards you find it not, though you seek it carefully with tears.*—I have nothing but my blessing and good will to give you. I have no money to leave you; and, if I had, it would be a mere bauble, a bubble, all vanity.’

“ In the night Mr. Dawes, sitting by him, heard him say in a low voice: ‘ O God, thou art the husband of the widow, the father of the fatherless: be thou a husband to *my* widow, a father to *my* children, a friend to this young friend who sits so kindly by me.’

“ He had some refreshing sleep, and awoke in great calmness. ‘ This,’ he said, ‘ is heaven begun: I have done with darkness *for ever—for ever*. Satan is vanquished. Nothing now remains, but *salvation with eternal glory—eternal glory.*’

“ In the morning, (Friday, March 23,) the flush in his cheek announced the return of fever, and with it there was some agitation and distress: ‘ But,’ said he, ‘ though I feel some temptation, more than I have done through the night, yet, for a dying day, it is all mercy. *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord: preserve me yet!*’—The paroxysm came on with great violence: his sufferings were extreme, and confusion and gloom prevailed. He cried earnestly to God. ‘ All my calm and comfort,’ he said, ‘ are gone: nothing remains of them but a faint recollection; and that I can pray for you.—Well, after all, God is

greater than Satan. Is not Christ all-sufficient? can he not *save to the uttermost*? hath he not promised to save? Lord, deliver me! Suffer not Satan to prevail! Pity, pity, Lord, pity me!’

“The absence of every murmur and complaint, under such heavy mental and bodily sufferings, was very striking. He said, with reference to dying under this gloom, ‘If it be so, I cannot help it: *Thou art righteous! Father, glorify thy name!*’

—If my soul were sent to hell  
Thy righteous law approves it well.

Yet save a trembling sinner, Lord,  
Whose hope, still hovering round thy word,  
Would light on some sweet promise there,  
Some sure support against despair.

—*Round thy word*: not hunting after any new revelation: No, no: I want nothing *new*; nothing but the *old* doctrine, and faith to lay hold of it. That will bear me through all.

“Dr. Slater now came. To him he related with great accuracy all that had passed, both as to body and mind, since he saw him on Tuesday; and asked his advice respecting taking opiates, which he found most efficacious in quieting his too great excitement, preventing delirium, and reducing the mind to its natural state, so that he could pray with peace and calmness.—‘Observe,’ he said, ‘I do not fear *death*.’ ‘No,’ replied Dr. S., ‘I know you desire to depart.’ ‘In that,’ said he, ‘the Lord’s will be done: I want *to do my duty*: I would not shorten my sufferings by the least sin.’

“In the evening the fever abated, and he became

calm. His mind dwelt much upon *love*. ‘*God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Faith that worketh by love.*’ He seemed full of tenderness and affection to all around him. ‘One evidence,’ he said, ‘I have of meetness for heaven—I feel such love to all mankind—to every man upon earth—to those who have most opposed and slandered me.’

“To the Rev. S. B. Mathews, then curate of Stone, now of Aston Sandford, and secretary to a neighbouring Bible Society, he said, with great energy: ‘Count it an honour, without recompence or reward, in the midst of frowns and opposition, *to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ* to poor sinners; to help to send his word all over the earth, by sea and land. None but Jesus can do *us* good: nor can we do any good to others but by him.—I have suffered more this fortnight than in all my seventy-four years: and Christ has appeared to me a hundred, yea a thousand times, if possible, more precious and glorious than ever: sin, more hateful and evil; salvation, more to be desired and valued.—Christ is ALL—the love of Christ—the power of Christ. *To me to live is Christ; and to die, I hope, will be gain.*—More than all in thee, I find. I have *found* more in him, than I ever expected to *want*.’

“To his daughter: ‘I used about this time in the evening to pray for you all; but I have no power now: hardly any to pray for myself. You must pray for me.’ Then, ‘Let me look to Christ to intercede for me.—I have not quite failed to improve the privilege of access to God by Christ—of his intercession: but I have not availed myself of it as I ought.

I hope you will all value and improve this inestimable privilege.—All depends on faith. Lord, give me faith!—the *precious faith of God's elect*! Pray for me that I may have faith—hope—love—

Till faith is sweetly lost in sight,  
And hope in full supreme delight,  
And everlasting love!

—God bless your poor afflicted father in law! He, perhaps, will not be here long. God spare him, if it be his will! But may he, too, have the *precious faith of God's elect*! May his partner be blessed, supported, and sanctified!

“To his wife: ‘God be your father, and your husband! I trust all mine will be kind to you. You have been a great blessing to me. We shall, I trust, meet in heaven. I have less doubt of you, than of myself.’

“A message was communicated to him from his highly esteemed friend the Rev. Daniel Wilson, expressive, among other things, of the great benefit he had been to the church of Christ. ‘Now this,’ said he, ‘is doing me harm. *God be merciful to me a sinner*, is the only ground on which I can rest. The last time I spoke to the people, it was on those words, and I applied them to myself: *Be merciful to me a sinner—the sinner—the chief of sinners*. If I am saved, God shall have all the glory.’

“A striking scene took place this evening (March 23d) with one of his poor parishioners, which showed his anxious care of his flock, and his clear recollection of the character and peculiar circumstances of the individuals. After advising him on his situation and conduct, ‘Christ,’ he observed, ‘is all, the world is

nothing. Had I the property of —, or a hundred times more, now that I lie here, what would it be worth? not a bubble of water. Seek to win Christ. Give up *every thing*,—*every thing* but duty, to avoid contention.—I have often prayed for you: often since I lay on this bed. Tell your wife to pray for me: she, at least, owes *much* to me.—I have often prayed for you *all*: particularly when I thought you were praying for me.’

“ ‘ At any rate, I have been a *plain* man. The *hypocrite*—the formalist—*will not pray always*. I have always resolved to enter eternity praying, Lord save me! *Now* the time is come.’

“ He had talked too much, and became agitated and distressed; but regained calmness in the night, and had some sleep. He said to his youngest son, who sat up with him, ‘ What is the world, and the glory of it? I would not change my hope, lean and meagre as it is, for all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, were I sure of living a thousand years longer to enjoy them.’

“ Through the greater part of Saturday (March 24) he was calm, though often gloomy. It was delightful to sit by him: he talked much to himself, and prayed in a low voice. The presence of one of us did not disturb *him*, while it was highly edifying and consoling to *us*.—In the afternoon he was shaved: and on my asking him, whether it troubled him much, he said, ‘ Not much:’ and alluding to a playful term by which we had been used to describe that operation, he proceeded, ‘ Oh that the Lord would *beautify* me with salvation! *He will beautify the meek with salvation*. (Psal. cxlix. 4.) That would

be a beautifying.’—As I sat by him in the evening he said, ‘ You love and pity me ; but that will do me little good. Your love and pity are beautiful, as far as they go : oh how beautiful are the love and pity of *the Saviour!*’

“ I asked him on Sunday afternoon, whether I should stay from church with him. ‘ Oh no,’ he replied : ‘ nothing gives me pleasure but what is for your good ; and the thought that you pray for me.’

“ Monday, March 26. To his servant : ‘ I thank you for all your kindness to me. You have been a faithful domestic, and I hope a conscientious one. If at any time I have been hasty and sharp, forgive me, and pray to God to forgive me : but lay the blame upon *me*, not upon religion.’

“ ‘ For one thing I rejoice—that I am not one of the Carlile party ; nor of the Humes and Rousseaus ; nor of the open profligates ; nor of the Pelagians, the self-justifiers. I might have been : I have done enough to provoke God to give me up.’

“ ‘ May Christ be unto me *wisdom and righteousness, and justification, and redemption,*’—he corrected himself ‘ *sanctification and redemption :*’ and added, ‘ Lord let me have *all*, though I should forget to ask aright!’

“ After mentioning his acute sufferings, such he said, as he had previously no conception of, he added : ‘ If my continuance here in them could be of the least spiritual benefit to any one, I should be willing to wait.’

“ On taking some refreshment : ‘ When *I* do not like any thing, I leave it ; but the Saviour, though

the cup was so bitter, did not leave it till he could say, *It is finished.*'

" 'I know not how it is, I repent and believe: I think I am *sure* I do, but I do not obtain the *clear* sense of pardon. There seems *a great gulph fixed*, which I cannot pass.' My mother answered, 'It is disease.' 'Yes,' he said, 'the *effect* of disease.'

" He expressed his fear that his death would occasion a season of temptation to his people; that the congregation would very probably be dispersed, in various directions; and then observed, 'It is just eighteen years since I came hither. I was much *fiercer* this day eighteen years, when taking leave of the people at the Lock'—alluding to the common language of this part of the country, which describes good health and spirits by the term *fierceness*. I seemed a little surprised; and he said, 'Do not you remember that I preached my farewell sermons at the Lock on the 26th of March?'

" Afterwards: 'I have not that comfort I could wish: but I think my mind is made up to bear quietly whatever God may please to send me, however uncomfortable even to the end, if it be for his glory.'

" On Tuesday morning (March 27th) he appeared dying, and suffered exquisitely. 'Oh,' he said, 'it is hard work. Death is a new acquaintance: a terrible one, except as Christ *giveth us the victory*, and the *assurance* of it. My flesh and my heart seem as if they *wanted* to fail, and could not. Who can tell what that tie is which binds body and soul together? How easily it is loosened in some; what a *wrench*



and *tear* is it in others. Lord, loosen it, if it be thy will!—I hope it is not wrong to pray for a release. If it be, God forgive me! Yet if it be thy will that I should wait for days and weeks, *Thou art righteous.*'

"Some refreshment was brought him, which he did not feel willing to take. He asked what was to be the effect of it, and seemed to fear being stupified. He was told it was only to make him more comfortable. 'That,' he replied, 'is death's work, or rather Christ's work by death: but I will do as I am bid. In my circumstances, to do as man bids me in these things is the best way of doing what God bids me.'

"He is continually repeating texts of scripture and verses of hymns. His tender affection for us all is astonishing in such a state of extreme suffering, and cuts us to the heart. On seeing my mother come in, he cried, 'Here comes another sufferer. Lord, thou art he that comfortest those that mourn: comfort her—support her! Be thou the husband of the widow!'

"He expressed his fear lest seeing him suffer so dreadfully should do us harm, and make us fear death in a way we ought not to do.—Still his desire for the promotion of the glory of God is the uppermost feeling in his mind. *Father, glorify thy name,* is his frequent language.—His deep humility—the simplicity of his faith in Christ—his hatred of sin—his spirituality of mind—his meekness, gentleness, and love, strike us all with admiration. He indeed *receives the kingdom of God as a little child.* The very way in which he mentions the name of the Sa-

viour, it is delightful to hear. He seems as much like him, as one can conceive any thing on earth to be: but his desires after holiness are such as will never be satisfied till he *awakes in his likeness*.

“ ‘ O Lord, magnify in me thy glory:—thy justice—thy hatred of sin—thy love—thy truth—thy pity:—and then take me to thyself!’—‘ The way is dark and deep; but

*His way was much deeper (rougher)  
And darker than mine:  
Did Jesus thus suffer,  
And shall I repine !’*

These were some of his sentences.—Again: ‘ If I were what I ought to be, I should be willing to live in this state six months, if it might be of any spiritual use to the worst infidel.’ Mr. Dawes said, ‘ You know our Saviour prayed, *If it be possible, let this cup pass from me*: so that it cannot be wrong to shrink from suffering.’ ‘ No,’ he replied, ‘ I do not think that it is *all* wrong. But I leave it in the hands of a Saviour, who is infinite in wisdom, power, and love: and I pray for patience.—I *hope*, but I cannot but feel some *fear*: and it is such an *eternal risk*, of such *infinite* importance, that the slightest fear seems to counterbalance even prevalent hope.’

“ Through the whole of Tuesday afternoon he was calm, and talked delightfully. He seemed to unite the cheerfulness, clearness of thought, and force of argument, of his former days, with the extraordinary tenderness, humility, meekness, and love of his present situation.—On his second son’s entering the room, he said to him, ‘ *Who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a par-*

taker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God that is among you,' &c.; (1 Pet. v. 1—4.) and proceeded to converse in a most interesting manner about his own past ministry. He had a blessed consciousness of having been *faithful*, which was a source of gratitude to him.

“ To his grandson: ‘ God bless you! I have often preached to you, and sometimes talked to you; but I have prayed for you a hundred times more. Seek and serve God. Religion is all that is valuable. You may think it does little for me now; but it is *all*. May you be a blessing to your parents, to your brothers and sisters. You are the eldest: should you outlive your father, be a father to the rest. I have always particularly wished you might be a minister of Christ: but this I must leave. God’s will be done!’

“ On another occasion: ‘ God bless you and make you a blessing to your father, mother, brothers, sisters, cousins, the pupils, schools, poor, and, if it might be, to his church!’—And yet again: ‘ Once more, my dear grandson, god bless you, and make you a blessing to your father, and your dear, dear mother, your brothers and sisters—a *large* blessing. Be *ambitious*, if I may so speak, to be useful. I have often prayed for *you*: pity *me*, and pray for *me*. You see me a great sufferer: but oh think not worse of Christ, or worse of religion, for that. Think worse of *sin*: none suffer but sinners.’—He again blessed him with great affection, adding, ‘ *The Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads!*—you, your brothers, and all your cousins, &c. &c.’

“ One thing is not to be forgotten concerning these benedictions which he continued to pronounce upon his grandson, that, though he much longed that he should be a minister, he yet solemnly warned him not to take the sacred office upon him, unless he were conscious of a heart devoted to the work of it. ‘ Rather,’ said he, ‘ make forks and rakes, rather plough the ground and thresh the corn, than be an indolent ungodly clergyman.’

“ He begged his curate to forgive him if he had been occasionally rough and sharp. ‘ I meant it for your good: but, like every thing of mine, it was mixed with sin. Impute it not, however, to my religion, but to my want of *more* religion.’

“ To his nephew, the Rev. Thomas Webster, (who came this evening,) he said: ‘ Hate sin more—Love Christ more—Pray more earnestly.—Beware of covetousness.—Your College feasts are sad things: Avoid animal indulgences, if you would lie easy on a dying bed.’

“ He slept much in the evening, but almost always awoke praying. Once he said, ‘ *Change this vile body of humiliation, that it may be like thy glorified body, O Saviour! but above all, let me have thy glorious holiness both of body and soul!*’—‘ How varying are my feelings! But the great event cannot depend on what passes in a few half-delirious days. No, my hope rests on a better foundation: it depends on my *receiving the reconciliation*—(Rom. v. 11. *Gr.*)—on my *being found in Christ—made the righteousness of God in him.* Oh for faith—*faith that worketh by love—purifieth the heart—overcometh the world!*’

He repeated many texts, verses of hymns, &c.; among them, with great emphasis,

‘ I wait for thy salvation, Lord,  
 With *strong* desires I wait ;  
 My soul, encouraged by thy word,  
 Stands watching at thy gate.’

He again renewed his expressions of good-will to all, and particularly his prayers for those who had opposed his views of the gospel.

“ Wednesday morning, March 28. He has slept a good deal, and is calm and cheerful, though in great suffering.—‘ This,’ he has said, ‘ is my last day. Still I have the last struggle to pass, and what that is, what that *wrench* is, who can tell me? Lord, give me patience, fortitude, holy courage!—I have heard persons treat almost with ridicule the expression, Put *underneath me the everlasting arms!* (Deut. xxxiii. 27.) But it is exactly what I want—*everlasting arms* to raise me up: to be *strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.*—I am in full possession of all my faculties: I know I am dying: I feel the *immense*, the *infinite* importance of the crisis: *Lord Jesus receive my spirit!* Thou art all I want: *None but Jesus* can do helpless sinners good.—Blessed be God there is one Saviour, though but one in the whole universe: and

His love is as great as his power,  
 And neither knows measure nor end.

’Tis Jesus the first and the last  
 Whose Spirit shall guide us safe home :  
 We’ll praise him for all that is past,  
 And trust him for all that’s to come.

—Had any other done what Christ has for us—raised us from such a deplorable, lost, wicked state—shed his blood for us—sent his Spirit to quicken us: would he not be greatly affronted if we were to doubt his perfecting his own work? And yet we are apt to doubt Christ's love. God forgive us that, with all the rest of our offences!—*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?*—

Sin my worst enemy before—

Ah! infinitely the worst!

Sin my worst enemy before  
 Shall vex my eyes and ears no more:  
 My inward foes shall all be slain,  
 Nor Satan break my peace again!

“ While we were at family worship, he prayed aloud the whole time, and with his usual minuteness of intercession—for his family (naming the particular branches,)—his parish—the young—his benefactors—his *enemies*—his country—prisoners—various different classes of sinners—enlarging his views and petitions to every part of the world.

“ He wished again to receive the holy sacrament, if it was judged proper. ‘ I mean it not,’ he said, ‘ as a form, but as a means of grace, appointed by the Saviour.’ After receiving it, he was much exhausted, and said but little. On awaking from sleep after some time, he said, ‘ We have had, I think, a sacrament of love: no resentment, no ill-will, no heart-burnings; all good-will, all love of God and of one another for Christ's sake.’

“ March 28. He again blessed his grandson with great affection, and said, ‘ I cannot say as Christ did, *My peace I give unto you*: I cannot wish *efficaciously*, only *benevolently*: but I mean what I say; and that is not what you will find many do in this world. It is a very insincere world; and a man who always means what he speaks is not a common character: but he is often thought an *unpleasant* man,—as I have been.’

“ He is so gentle and loving, it is so delightful to attend upon him, that the servants, finding themselves in danger of contention which should wait upon him with refreshments, &c., agreed together to take it by turns, that each might have her due share of the pleasure and benefit. And yet he is continually begging our forgiveness for his impatience and want of thankfulness, and entreating our prayers that God may forgive him.

“ ‘ *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,—light compared with what sin deserves—with what the damned endure—with what the Saviour suffered.*’—He went through the whole passage, commenting on every expression, but was not distinctly audible.

“ To one of his servants: ‘ Pray for me: I value your prayers; and that not a whit the less because you are a servant. I have often prayed for *you*, and I trust that blessings have come upon you in consequence: Pray for *me*, that, through your prayers, thanksgivings may redound unto God.’

“ ‘ *Our happiness here, little as it is, consists in hungering and thirsting; (Matt. v. 6.) but there we*

shall *hunger no more, neither thirst any more.* Now he is *satisfied: Now he is comforted.*' (Luke xvi. 25.)

"He often checks his anxious desire to depart, and prays to be enabled to wait patiently; 'that *patience may have her perfect work.*' Yet he dreads the last unknown agony. He speaks of it as the effect of sin, and therefore terrible.

"In great suffering in the evening, he exclaimed, 'O death, when wilt thou come and finish this? Thou answerest, When God sends me. Grant me patience, merciful God!'—He then remarked on this: 'This is almost like praying to death. How much tendency is there to such random stuff among protestants, as well as among papists, when the mind is excited.'

"He now received intelligence, with great pleasure and gratitude, of the birth of another granddaughter, and some time after said, 'I have twenty-one grandchildren; the Lord bless them with all spiritual blessings, and make them blessings, large blessings in their families—to the church—and to the world. *The God which fed me all my life long bless them!* It matters little what their station here is—even if servants, like Jacob:—*the angel which redeemed me from all evil bless them!* Only redeem them from all evil—from sin—from guilt—from the devil—from this present evil world—and bring them to everlasting glory!'

"Thursday morning, March 29. On my entering the room—'Again we meet once more. Oh how long will this last? I feel as if I *could not die.* What need have I of patience and submission?'—It was suggested that he was kept here to do us good.



‘ Oh,’ said he, ‘ my *selfishness!* I feel it difficult to be willing to stay, even if it were so. But I do so fear doing you harm; being carried away, in great suffering, by any sudden temptation, to say or do what may injure you.—But I leave this; and commit myself to the care of the merciful Saviour.’

“ He continually dwells on the sacramental service, and repeats passages from it, particularly that prayer, ‘ that we may be full-filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction.’

“ Referring to his death, he said: ‘ I hope my family have too much good sense to make a *raree-show* of my funeral, either as respects the manner, or the place, or the tombstone, or any inscription upon it. Hath *death* its fopperies!—I should wish every thing to be merely decorous—below *par*—indeed considerably below *par* to what is usual on such occasions.—If it be judged quite essential for a *parson* to lie within the churchwalls, I will not put such a negative upon it as would be distressing to survivors, though I think the dirtiest hole good enough. Whoever is paid, I wish the men who carry me to that *long home* to be *amply* remunerated.—There is a long document which I wrote some years ago, a sort of counterpart to the Force of Truth: I do not *wish* any use to be made of it, but perhaps it may prevent errors and mistakes. I want no memoirs nor obituaries.’

“ On another occasion, he desired that, if any funeral sermon were to be preached for him, it might by all means be on a weekday, not on a Sunday: probably from tenderness for the feelings of neighbouring ministers, whose congregations might otherwise be drawn away from them on the occasion. And he

intimated that the sentence, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, (Luke xviii. 13.) might furnish a very proper text:—dwelling on the word ἰλάσθητι, as implying *mercy through a propitiation*; and the words τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ, as signifying emphatically *the sinner*.

Here the memorandums first referred to terminate.—After my arrival (on Thursday, March 29,) fewer notes were made. He frequently slumbered a good deal, and said less than before. One object, moreover, proposed in the memorandums no longer required them. My sister, however, has made the further minutes which follow.

“He still observed how his time passed, and lamented his incapacity to spend it constantly in prayer and praise. ‘Could I be sure,’ he said, ‘that I was totally *unable*, I should be more satisfied: but I feel guilty. I seem at such times of stupor as if I had not fellowship either with the church on earth, or that in heaven.’

“On one occasion, after complaining of interruption by which he had been ‘kept from praying, he thought, for an hour and a half,’ on being reminded how soon he would serve God day and night without ceasing, he exclaimed, with an energy of which we thought him incapable, ‘O what a transition!’

“On Tuesday, April 11, my two younger brothers, with his grandson, were compelled to leave him. The parting was solemn and deeply affecting. He poured forth prayers for them and theirs with his usual fervour; and continued, long after they left the room, raising his hands and eyes to heaven in silent supplication, with an expression of countenance which can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it.

“ On Sunday, April 15, he dismissed me to church in a very animated manner. After blessing me, and imploring blessings on all who should worship with me, and on all the congregations of Christ’s church, he said, raising his hands with great animation, *Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things, and let the whole earth be filled with his glory! He is highly exalted above all blessing and praise.*

“ On our return, he said to his curate, ‘ I hoped I should have done first.’ The curate congratulated him on the happiness he enjoyed. ‘ No,’ he said, ‘ you are mistaken : my soul is not happy *now* ; it is still diseased : but I am waiting, and expecting soon to be *quite* happy.’ Still his feeling was, that nothing but heaven could satisfy his enlarged desires. He added many prayers for his curate, and for the success of his ministry.

“ On Monday, while he was suffering great oppression, he said to the poor afflicted woman, who had so long been an inmate in his family : ‘ This is hard work : but let us *think* of heaven ; let us *hope* for heaven ; let us pray for heaven. *We* shall soon meet again.’ ”

In letters to friends, or members of the family still absent, a few sentences have likewise been preserved. In this way, his observations on ‘ posthumous reputation ;’ his prayers ‘ not to be abhorred of God, though *abhorrible*, and abhorring himself ;’ to be made ‘ one of those in whom Christ should *come to be admired in that day* ;’ and some others, have been already reported.

It may be remarked, in general, that his use of the

language of the Lord's prayer was continual, during every part of his illness; as was likewise that of various parts of the Church Liturgy, particularly of the Communion Service, and the sentence in the Burial Service, "Suffer me not, at my last hour, for any pains of death to fall from thee!"

His constant recurrence to my expression, "In God's good time," continued to the very end of his illness. On another occasion, on my suggesting the great tenderness of the language in the ciiiid Psalm, "Like as a father *pitieth his children*, so the Lord *pitieth them that fear him*," he expressed his sense of it, and immediately connected with it one in the Liturgy, which he said he greatly admired—"Let the *pitifulness of thy great mercy* loose us."—Another time I reminded him of one of the triumphant verses at the close of the lxxiiid Psalm; and, on his questioning whether it might be applied to him, (as I was aware he might probably do,) I remarked the writer's darkness and temptation in the former part of the psalm—as if "God had forgotten to be gracious," and had "shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure"—but that in the end he found it was "his own infirmity," and that he was "continually with God," God had all the time "holden him by his right hand." (Verse 23.) He replied, "Well, it is one of the passages that I keep *working upon*."—One morning, near the close of his life, I expressed regret that he had spent so distressing a night: his reply was in the one word "*Past!*" with an air of indifference to it, as having no longer any existence.

Some further passages from the obituary may here be introduced.

“ Throughout his illness, all his tempers and dispositions marked a soul ripe for heaven. His *patience* was most exemplary, though this was the grace which, almost more than any other, he feared would fail; but it increased to the end. On the only point on which any approach to impatience had been discovered, his *desire to depart*, he had become almost perfectly resigned; and though he still inquired frequently if any ‘token for good’ appeared, yet on receiving a negative answer, he only observed, ‘Then I must seek a fresh stock of patience.’—His *kindness* and affection, to all who approached him, were carried to the greatest height, and showed themselves in a singularly minute attention to all their feelings, and whatever might be for their comfort, to a degree that was quite affecting; especially at a time when he was suffering so much himself, often in mind as well as body.—Even in the darkest times, ‘*Thou art righteous! Father, glorify thy name!*’ solemnly enunciated, was the sentence most frequently on his lips, and marked his profound *submission*.—His *humility* and sense of utter unworthiness seemed more deep than words could express.—It need scarcely be said that *Christ* was now more precious in his eyes than ever; and his expressions of exclusive, undivided, and adoring adherence to him for salvation, if possible more strong.—At the same time, he refused the appropriation to himself of those promises which belong only to true believers in Christ, except as it could be shown that he bore the *character* commonly annexed to the promise—such as those that *fear* the Lord, that *love* God, *repent*, *believe*, and *obey*. When he could not trace this in himself, he would have recourse

only to those which encourage even the chief of sinners to come to Christ, and assure them, that *him that cometh he will in no wise cast out.*

“ In this connexion it may be remarked, that whatever dissatisfaction with himself he at any time expressed, he never intimated the least wavering as to the truths which he had spent his life in inculcating, or impeached his own sincerity and faithfulness in the discharge of his ministry.”

I only add further, that he would always, when he received the sacrament, and, after a short prayer, which, during the latter part of the time, we every night offered up with him, have repeated to him the affecting commendation in the service for the Visitation of the Sick: “ Unto God’s gracious mercy and protection we commit thee: the Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace, both now and evermore;” and most affecting was the solemnity with which he listened, and pronounced his *Amen* to it.

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Three days after his death, I made the following memorandum of

“ *His FEARS which were never realized.*

“ 1. That he should bring any blot upon his profession. In addition to the dread with which every zealous Christian, who loves God and man, will regard such an event, he felt himself placed in a peculiar situation, on account of the attention which he had

attracted: that many eyes were upon him: that a material false step or inconsistency in him might, in a great degree, frustrate the labours of a long and indefatigable life. This was not merely the apprehension of his death-bed, but one which had for years influenced him *to walk circumspectly*.—But now he rests from all such anxiety. All danger of this kind is past for ever. Death has put his broad seal upon the whole, and rendered what is done irrevocable. And, blessed be God! the whole is *substantially* good.

• “ 2. Lest, in a period of enfeebled powers, he should *unsay* any thing, which, in a more sound state of mind, he had inculcated, and should thus convey any less strict and less scriptural views of Christian truth and duty; and that this, getting abroad, should weaken the effect of what he had previously taught. But, so far from this being the case, whatever passed, even to his latest hour, has tended more deeply to impress the serious, holy, practical views of the gospel which he always presented.

“ 3. Lest, even under the influence of delirium, he should be driven to say or do any thing offensive or dishonourable to God. He trembled lest, in this way at least, Satan should get any *advantage against him*, and thus take some ‘revenge on him’ at last, for what he had done against his kingdom during life. He seemed to apprehend a peculiar ‘effort’ of this sort against him; and therefore prayed constantly, *Bruise Satan under my feet shortly*: and deprecated most earnestly the least failure of patience and resignation to the will of God.—And in these respects too he *was heard in that he feared*. Nothing amounting to what is commonly esteemed delirium

ever occurred: nor did a word expressive of any thing contrary to the deepest piety and submission escape his lips. And his patience, under protracted and often very severe suffering, it was perfectly delightful to behold.

“ 4. At times, though not generally, he even dreaded the *consequences* of death: ‘Not,’ said he (as it has already been related) ‘that I have not *prevailing* hope.’—But, about ten days before his death, he observed, ‘I have not the dread which I felt of the consequences of death:’ and he said little afterwards that indicated any return of it.

“ 5. But a dread of death itself, of the act and agony of dying, next harassed his mind. ‘No man,’ he said, ‘can tell me what death is; and I have an *iron-strength* of constitution which makes me tremble for the last struggle.’—But this too subsided, and disappeared: and, when the time came, oh how mercifully was he, and were we all, dealt with, even in this minor consideration! There was no agony, no struggle whatever. His countenance assumed a placid expression, one might almost say a sweet and heavenly smile: and the whole appearance was more like that of an infant sinking into sleep, than that of a strong man expiring.”

6. It might have been added, that, whereas he had anticipated at least departing under gloom and darkness, his darkness from time to time dispersed, and a heavenly light shone in upon his mind. The cheerful, as well as holy, sentiments which he expressed on Sunday, the day before his death, have been recorded, and the “delightful things” which he uttered on the day of his dissolution have been alluded to,



though no distinct memorandum was made of them.—On the whole, therefore, we may with adoring thankfulness, conclude—

“NOT ONE THING THAT HE FEARED CAME UPON HIM: BUT EVERY HOPE WAS REALIZED OR EXCEEDED.”

## CHAPTER XVII.

### HIS CHARACTER—HABITS—SENTIMENTS ON EDUCATION.

IT has been my aim, in the preceding memoirs, to place the subject of them so fully in the view of my readers—speaking, writing, acting, before them,—as to accomplish that which an ancient Roman poet is said to have achieved in his own writings—

Ut omnis  
Votivâ pateat veluti descripta tabellâ  
Vita senis.

So far therefore as I have attained my object, the necessity of any elaborate attempt, on my part, to delineate my father's character is superseded: he must be already better known than mere description could make him.

Mr. Wilson, however, has given to the public, in his funeral sermons, a very masterly sketch of "the chief circumstances both of the public and private character" of his departed friend, which I should feel it a very essential omission not to introduce into the present work. This therefore I shall insert; premising that it will serve to characterize some of my father's principal writings, as well as to pourtray their author. After this I shall subjoin some additional particulars, which have occurred to my own mind.

“ In considering *the public labours* of our venerable friend,” observes Mr. W., we shall find that, after the Apostle’s example, *he fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith.*

“ The manner in which he was called to the spiritual combat was remarkable. His narrative of this spiritual change, we may venture to assert, will be classed in future times with the most important of those various works, which in different ages have recorded the triumphs of the gospel of Christ. ‘ The Force of ‘ Truth’ cannot indeed be equalled with ‘ The Confessions of St. Augustine ;’ but it bears a general similarity to that incomparable work, in exemplifying the main features of a truly Christian conversion, in affording a striking illustration of the divine grace, and in setting before us an impressive picture of a laborious and successful investigation of truth. It reminds the reader yet more sensibly, though still with a wide interval, of the early history of Luther, and of the painful working out of his own way by intense prayer and study of the scriptures, which distinguished that great reformer. The church has, in fact, seen few examples, in these latter days, of the efficacy of the doctrine of Christ so minutely and satisfactorily detailed by the avowals of the individuals themselves, as in the instance which we are now considering. We here behold a man of strong natural powers, intrenched in the sophistries of human pride, and a determined opponent of almost all the chief truths of the gospel, gradually convinced and subdued. We see him engaging in a laborious study of the scripture with opinions and prejudices firmly fixed, and reluctant to admit a humi-

liating scheme of theology: yet borne on, contrary to his expectations and wishes and worldly interest, by the simple energy of truth. We view him arriving, to his own dismay, at one doctrine after another. We behold him making every step sure as he advances, till he at length works out, by his own diligent, and most anxious investigation of the sacred volume, all the parts of divine truth, which he afterwards discovered to be the common faith of the church of Christ, to be the foundation of all the reformed communities, and to be essentially united with every part of divine revelation. He was thus taught the apostolical doctrines of the deep fall and apostacy of man, of his impotency to any thing spiritually good, the proper atonement and satisfaction of Christ, the trinity of persons in the Godhead, regeneration and progressive sanctification by the Holy Spirit, justification by faith only, and salvation by grace. These great principles he perceived to be indissolubly connected with repentance unto life, separation from the sinful customs and spirit of the world, self-denial and the bearing of reproach for Christ's sake, holy love to God and man, and activity in every good word and work.—Further he learnt to unite both these series of truths with dependence upon Christ for the supply of needful grace, humble trust in his promises for final victory, and an unreserved ascription of all blessings to the divine grace.—Lastly, and after some interval, he embraced the doctrines relating to the secret and merciful will of God in our election in Christ Jesus; although he did not think a belief in these mysterious doctrines to be indispensable to salvation, nor consider the evidence for them, satisfactory as he

deemed it, to carry with it that irresistible conviction which had attended his inquiries with respect to those essential and directly vital truths of religion before enumerated. The whole narrative of the change which led to the adoption of these views of religion, it so honest, and so evidently free from enthusiasm, as to constitute a most striking testimony to the efficacy of the grace of God.

“ After he had once discovered and embraced in all their fulness and practical application, the chief doctrines of the New Testament, he may truly be said to have *kept the faith* with undeviating constancy. During forty-five years he continued to teach and write and live in the spirit of those holy principles. What he was with respect to them, in the earliest part of this period, the same he continued in the latest, except as each year added something to his conviction of their truth, and to the maturity of his judgment respecting them. There are few writers in whom consistency is so strikingly observable through so many voluminous works.<sup>1</sup> He was placed at different periods of his life in many scenes of peculiar difficulty, where the current of opinion within as well as without his own more immediate circle, might have induced him to vary or conceal the faith upon some points of importance; but nothing moved him *from his own steadfastness*.<sup>2</sup> Nor was his scheme of doctrine more apostolical, than his method of publicly expounding and applying it in his sermons and writings. He *kept the faith*, by ever maintaining a theology, not only pure and orthodox as to its consti-

<sup>1</sup> “ Six volumes quarto, and nine or ten large volumes octavo.”

<sup>2</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 17.

tuent elements and general character, but scripturally exact in the arrangement, the proportions, the symmetry, the harmony of its several doctrines, and in the use to which each was, on the proper occasion, applied. In this view, the habit which he had been led to form of studying the scripture for himself, and of diligently comparing all its parts with each other, was of essential service. He was not a man of ordinary mould. The humble submission to every part of divine revelation, the abstinence from metaphysical subtilities, the entire reliance on the inspired doctrine in all its bearings and consequences, the candour on points really doubtful or of less vital importance, which are the characteristics of his writings, give them extraordinary value. While, for example, he firmly believed the essential and vital truths which I before noticed, he held with no less firmness the accountableness of man, the perpetual obligation of the holy law, the necessity of addressing the hearts and consciences of sinners, and of using without reserve the commands, cautions, and threatenings so copiously employed in the inspired books; the importance of close inquiries into the detail of private, social, and relative duties, the necessity of pointing out those imperfections of temper or practice, by which a false religion betrays its unsoundness, and of following out the grand branches of scripture morals into their proper fruits in the regulation of the life. In a word, he entered as fully into the great system of plain means and duties, on the one hand, as of the mysterious doctrines of divine grace on the other. He united the Epistles of St. Paul and St. James.

“ With such fidelity, we wonder not that he had,

like the Apostle before him, to *fight a good fight*. He was not a man to receive the impression of his age, but to give it. On various occasions he thought it incumbent on him to come forward publicly in defence of the faith of the gospel; a task in the execution of which the firmest adherence to truth, and a candid treatment of his opponents, were ever united with singular knowledge of scripture, with great acuteness of reasoning, and with a simple honesty of purpose and of principle, which it was difficult for an impartial inquirer to withstand. At the time when he first began to preach the gospel faithfully, he found many who had habituated themselves to such statements of the grace and privileges of Christianity, as tended insensibly to injure the minds of their hearers, by inducing them to separate the duties of the Bible from its doctrines. With such fatal errors he made no compromise. His early writings were chiefly directed against this class of tenets, which, however unintentionally on the part of some who maintained them, verged towards the Antinomian heresy. At a later period he engaged in a very different service, a contest with the adherents of infidelity. Towards the close of his days, opinions tending to magnify human merit, and in their effect subversive of the doctrines of divine grace, attracted his notice, and were encountered by him with the same manliness of resistance, which in earlier life he had opposed to errors of contrary description. In all these instances few will hesitate to allow that he *fought a good fight*. The prejudices with which a living controversialist cannot fail to be regarded must of course be allowed to subside, before a calm judgment can be formed of

his merits as a disputant, or in general as a writer. But, when that period shall arrive, I doubt not that his laborious productions, more especially his masterly reply to the work entitled, ‘A Refutation of Calvinism,’ will be admitted to rank amongst the soundest theological writings of our age.

“In these and other labours he *finished his course*. For his attention was not absorbed in his writings. He was a laborious minister in every function of that sacred calling, and especially in the more retired walks of it. In the pulpit indeed an asthmatical affection, added to a strong provincial accent, an inattention to style and manner, and prolixity, rendered his discourses less attractive than those of many very inferior men; though even here, such were the richness and originality of his matter, such his evident acquaintance with scripture, and with the human heart, and such the skill which he evinced as a Christian moralist, that by hearers of attentive and reflecting minds he was listened to, not only with respect, but with delight. But in visiting the sick, in resolving cases of conscience, in counselling young ministers, in assisting various religious and benevolent institutions, his success was peculiarly great. Indeed, if his exertions as an author were left out of consideration, his other labours for forty-five years as the chaplain of a hospital, as a parish priest, and generally as a member of society and of the Christian church, would place him on a level with most pious clergymen, however zealous, diligent, or useful.

“But his widest and most important field of usefulness, and that which I have reserved for the last topic in the consideration of his public character,



was as a commentator on the Holy Scriptures. In this he may be truly said to have *finished his course*, as well as *fought a good fight* and *kept the faith*. It is difficult to form a just estimate of a work on which such an author laboured for thirty-three years. It entitles him of itself to rank at the head of the theologians of his own time,<sup>1</sup> as at once the most laborious and important writer of the day. The capital excellency of this valuable and immense undertaking perhaps consists in the following more closely than any other, the fair and adequate meaning of every part of scripture, without regard to the niceties of human systems: it is in every sense of the expression a scriptural comment. It has likewise a further and a strong recommendation in its originality. Every part of it is thought out by the author for himself, not borrowed from others. The later editions indeed are enriched with brief and valuable quotations from several writers of credit: but the substance of the work is entirely his own. It is not a compilation, it is an original production, in which you have the deliberate judgment of a masculine and independent mind on all the parts of Holy Scripture. Every student will understand the value of such a work. Further, it is the comment of our age, presenting many of the last lights which history casts on the interpretation of prophecy, giving several of the remarks which sound criticism has accumulated from the different branches of sacred literature, obviating the chief objections which modern annotators have advanced

<sup>1</sup> "I esteemed Mr. Robinson the greatest preacher in England; as Mr. Scott is the greatest divine."—*Dr. Claud. Buchanan.*

against some of the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, and adapting the instructions of scripture to the peculiar circumstances of the times in which we live. I may observe also that the faults of method and style which considerably detract from the merit of some of his other writings, are less apparent here, where he had only to follow the order of thought in the sacred book itself; whilst all his powers and attainments have their full scope. It was the very undertaking which required, less than any other, the qualifications which he did not possess, and demanded, more than any other, those in which he excelled. It required matured knowledge of scripture, skill as a textuary, sterling honesty, a firm grasp of truth, unfeigned submission of mind to every part of the inspired records, a holy temper of heart, unparalleled diligence and perseverance: and these were the very characteristics of the man. When to these particulars it is added that he lived to superintend four editions, each enriched with much new and important matter, and had been engaged above three years in a new one, in which for the fifth time he had nearly completed a most laborious revision of the whole work, we must at least allow the extent and importance of the author's exertions. Accordingly the success of the work has been rapidly and steadily increasing from the first, not only in our own country, but wherever the English language is known. It will soon be in the hands of most careful students of the holy volume, whether in the first instance, they agree with the author's chief sentiments or not. Nor is the time distant, when, the passing controversies of the day having been forgotten, this prodigious

work will generally be confessed in the protestant churches, to be one of the most sound and instructive commentaries produced in our own or any other age.

“ To these more public labours, I proceed to add the characteristics of *his private life* as a Christian, which corresponded to them, and were indeed, under the divine blessing, their spring and source. All he did as a writer and a minister proceeded from what he was as a humble believer in Jesus Christ. In this view also he *fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith.*

“ *Determination of mind* in serving God formed the basis of his character, and gave strength and firmness to every other part of it. Whatever else he was, he was most decisive in religion. From the time he began in earnest to investigate the doctrines of the Bible for himself, he not only admitted them as true, in proportion as he discovered them to be such, but acted upon them, governed his temper and conduct by them, fearlessly professed them before men, and cheerfully suffered whatever reproach or difficulties they might occasion. No one could ever mistake him. He always avowed what he conscientiously believed to be true, whatever others, even his nearest connexions, might think. Timidity, reserve, subterfuge, concealment, ambiguity, love of the world, were not his faults. The manner in which he had slowly and reluctantly arrived at truth at first, gave him such an assured confidence that he was right, that nothing afterwards could turn him aside. The fashionable opinions or practices of the day, the number or station of his opponents, the distractions and divisions of parties, the plausible appearance of cer-

tain errors, the reputation for piety or talent of those who incautiously favoured them, made no difference to him. A powerful discriminating judgment, and an intimate acquaintance with every part of scripture, gave such a tone of firmness to his habits of thinking and acting, that he seemed like a giant taking his course among children, regardless of their puny opposition, and bent only on the achievement of his own great objects. It must, on the other hand, be owned that he sometimes erred by want of sufficient consideration for the feelings and prejudices of others, and sometimes was betrayed into rudeness and overconfidence—I wish not to conceal his human failings—but these failings he constantly opposed, and as he advanced in life almost entirely subdued; whilst the sterling honesty and determination of his character, the spring of all his usefulness, remained unimpaired.

“ *Extraordinary diligence* was the handmaid to this capital excellency. He was always at work, always busy, always redeeming time; yet never in a hurry. His heart was given up to his pursuits; he was naturally of a studious turn; and his labour was his delight. He gradually acquired in a degree beyond most men, the habit of abstracting his mind from sensible objects, and of concentrating his thoughts on a particular topic; nor could the distractions inseparable from a hurried journey, or from a walk through the busy scenes of a great city, at all divert him on such occasions from the course of thought in which he was engaged. And whenever a subject which he had once studied, was proposed to him, he could immediately fix his mind intently upon it, and

recall all the chief arguments by which it was supported. So that he lived, in fact, twice the time that most other students do in the same number of years. To support this he had an iron-strength of constitution. And for five or six and forty years he studied eight or ten hours a day, and frequently twelve or fourteen, except when interrupted by sickness. His very relaxations were often equal to the diligence of others. But it was not merely incessant labour which distinguished this remarkable man—it was incessant labour directed to important objects. His attention was always occupied by his proper work. He was not merely studious, but studious of what was immediately useful. He was not a desultory reader attracted by every novelty, and wasting his time on inferior topics or authors of less moment; but a reader of what was solid and appropriate and directly subservient to the great subject in hand. From an early age, indeed, he was almost entirely self-taught; the only education he received having been at a grammar school, from the age of ten to fifteen. He had no aid afterwards from masters, small means for the purchase of books, and scarcely any access to great collections. A few first-rate works formed his library, and these he thoroughly mastered. He never remitted his exertions in improving his works. After thirty-three years bestowed on his Comment, he was as assiduous in revising, as he had originally been in composing it. The marginal references cost him seven years of labour. And the interval between the fourth and the present edition was employed in attempting a Concordance on a new plan which he did not live to complete, but which by

keeping in exercise that minute acquaintance with scripture and that aptitude of reference, for which he was distinguished, must have materially assisted him in his last revision.

“ In his *domestic circle* his character was most exemplary. No blot ever stained his name. A disinterestedness and unbending integrity in the midst of many difficulties so raised him in the esteem of all who knew him, as greatly to honour and recommend the gospel he professed. He was in all respects an excellent father of a family. What he appeared in his preaching and writings, that he was amongst his children and servants. He did not neglect his private duties on the ground of public engagements; but he carried his religion into his house, and placed before his family the doctrines he taught, embodied in his own evident uprightness of conduct. This determination and consistency in personal religion instructed his children better than a thousand set lessons. It is indeed commonly found that the general behaviour and conversation of parents produce a decidedly deeper impression on the minds of the young than any formal instructions, however in themselves excellent. When children are addressed directly, their minds recoil, or at least their attention is apt to flag; but their own shrewd observations on what they see done or hear said by others, on the estimates which they perceive their parents to form of things and characters, and on the governing principles by which they judge their conduct to be regulated, sink deep into their memories, and in fact constitute by far the most effective part of education. It was on this principle that our deceased friend acted. He

did not inculcate certain doctrines merely, or talk against covetousness and the love of the world, or insist on the public duties of the sabbath, or the private ones of the family, whilst the bent of his conversation was worldly, his tempers selfish, his habits indulgent, and his vanity or ambition manifest under the thin guise of religious phraseology: but he exhibited to his household a holy and amiable pattern of true piety—he was a man of God—imperfect indeed, but consistent and sincere. Accordingly, all his children became, by the divine mercy, his comfort during life, and now remain to call him blessed, and hand down his example to another generation.

“ A *spirit of prayer and devotion* was, further, a conspicuous ornament of his character. He lived *near to God*. Intercessory prayer was his delight. He was accustomed in his family devotions to intercede earnestly for the whole church, for the government of his country, for the ministers of religion, for those preparing for the sacred office, for schools and universities, for the different nations of Christendom, for the heathen and Jews, and for all religious institutions; varying his supplications as circumstances seemed to dictate. As he approached the close of life, his deep humility of mind, and his zeal for the glory of his Saviour, were very affecting and edifying to those who were present on these occasions. He was the aged saint filled with the love of God and man, and supplicating for the whole human race. More especially, he had for above twenty years been constantly imploring of God that he would open some way for the conversion of the world, as well as the more extensive diffusion of genuine Chris-

tianity at home, before he saw any apparent means for the accomplishment of his desires; and, when the establishment of the Bible and Missionary institutions seemed to afford a prospect of the consummation which he had so fervently desired, his thanksgivings to God abounded. His studious and secluded life by no means produced any indifference as to the active schemes which were formed for the salvation of mankind, nor any undue or unreasonable fastidiousness as to the means employed—faults often connected with literary habits—but whenever the end of religious societies was good, and the methods they employed lawful, he prayed most earnestly for their prosperity, and blessed God for their success; though perhaps in the details of their constitution or proceedings there might be some things which he could not fully approve. Thus were his firmness and energy softened by candour and enlarged benevolence.

“ His *faith and patience under afflictions* must not be omitted. Though his constitution in itself was robust, his health was far from being good. An obstinate asthma, with exhausting bilious attacks, exposed him at times to acute sufferings for more than forty years of his life. Inflammatory fever succeeded these diseases during the last seven years, aggravated by a malady most inconvenient and alarming. He had moreover, as those who know his private history are well aware, painful mortifications and vexations to endure whilst he resided at Olney, and still more severe ones during a large part of the seventeen years which he spent in London. His great work, the Commentary, was also the occasion



of almost constant perplexity, embarrassment, and disappointment for nearly the whole of the first fourteen years of his labours upon it; so that almost any other person would have relinquished the undertaking in despair. To these must be added a frequent recurrence of severe domestic trials and calamities, often increased by dejection of spirits. Yet his faith and patience bore up under all. Those who observed him in scenes of peculiar difficulty, were often reminded of the words of the royal preacher, *the spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity*. This seemed to be the brief history of his life. Perhaps few writers, who ultimately attained the esteem and influence of this remarkable man for the last twenty years of his labours, ever reached such an eminence through greater discouragements of almost every description. During the twenty-five years preceding that period, he had experienced inconveniences and difficulties in a degree that can scarcely be imagined by any but his intimate friends.

“I close this review of his character by noticing *the gradual but regular advances which he made in every branch of real godliness, and especially in overcoming his constitutional failings*. This is, after all, the best test of Christian sincerity. A man may profess almost any principles or hold any kind of conduct for a time; but to continue a self-denying course of consistent and growing piety, to apply the strict rule of the divine law honestly and unreservedly to the whole of our conduct, to cultivate carefully every branch of our duty, to resist and contend against the evil tempers and dispositions to which we are naturally most prone—and to unite all

this with humble trust in the merits of our Saviour, and with unfeigned ascription of every thing good in us to His grace and mercy ; this it is that marks a real renovation of heart, and stamps the genuine believer in the gospel of Christ. And such was the individual whom we are considering. His failings, as I have already intimated, lay on the side of roughness and severity of temper, pride of intellect, and confidence in his own powers. But, from the time when he first obeyed with his whole heart the truth of the gospel, he set himself to struggle against these and all other evil tendencies, to study self-control, to aim at those graces which are most difficult to nature, and to employ all the motives of the gospel to assist him in the contest ; and he gradually so increased in habitual mildness, humility, and tenderness for others, as to become no less exemplary for these virtues, than he had long been for the opposite qualities of religious courage, firmness, and determination. He used to observe, that it was no excuse for a man to allege, that this or that holy temper was not his turn ; for every grace ought to be, and must be, the turn of every sincere Christian. I can most truly say, that during an acquaintance of about twenty-five years, which gradually matured, on my part, into a filial affection, I scarcely ever saw an instance of more evident growth in real obedience, real love to God and man, real victory over natural infirmities, in a word, real Christian holiness. In the concluding years of his life, he was, as it appeared to me, obviously ripening for heaven. *He had fought a good fight, he had finished his course, he had kept the faith ;* so that at last his genuine hu-

mility before God, his joy in Christ Jesus, his holy zeal for the diffusion of the gospel, his tender affection to his family and all around him, his resignation to the will of his heavenly Father, and his exclusive trust in the merits and grace of his Saviour, seemed to leave little more to be done, but for the stroke of death to bring him *to his grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in its season!*"

To this vigorous and animated delineation, I shall now add a few particulars from my own observation and reflection.

What was the class of *intellectual* endowments, that distinguished my revered father, must be obvious to all who are acquainted with his works. Acuteness, comprehension, close reasoning, judgment,—these are every where apparent. In that imagination, which might have enlivened and adorned his preaching and writings, he was no doubt deficient. Nor did he advance pretensions to that boldness and novelty of conception, which bestow the title of genius. Yet his train of thinking was always marked by that degree, at least, of originality which made it fairly his own, and rendered it interesting to all who were competent to appreciate it, and to compare it with what was current among other writers upon similar subjects. His style was grave and unadorned, but manly, and in general clear and vigorous: often conveying forcible sentiments in a concise and striking manner: and, as has been intimated in a letter inserted in this work, he was studious to exclude those peculiarities of language, which have frequently given needless disgust in religious writings; though he

could never consent to scruple the use of scriptural phraseology.—The admirable HENRY MARTYN has made the following remark in his journal, April 26, 1807: “Began Scott’s Essays, and was surprised indeed at the originality and vigour of the sentiments and language.”

*Sound judgment* was, equally with vigour and decision, the characteristic of his mind. It discovered itself in his early days, and it grew in him to the last; and gave, under the divine guidance and teaching, which he so constantly supplicated, that steadiness and consistency to his character, conduct, and writings, which Mr. Wilson has celebrated. The unprejudiced observer will, I think, admit it to be very striking to consider, at what sound and sober views of scriptural theology he so early arrived; such that he never saw reason afterwards to alter them in any point worthy of notice. And this did not arise from his embracing *in toto* the system of any set of men: he escaped the errors of those whom he joined, as well as renounced those of the class which he left. Thus, while acknowledging in the Force of Truth his obligations to the writings of the excellent Mr. Hervey, he still avows his disagreement with him upon some points: and late in life he says concerning one for whom he entertained a great esteem, “I always thought his writings on the point of religious experience *narcotic* to those *within*, and calculated to excite prejudices, and give plausibility to those *without*.” No: it was the exercise of a sound, yet humble mind, in the intense *meditation of God’s testimonies*, which thus made him, in some points, *wiser than his teachers*.

At the close of twenty years, he prefixed to the fifth edition of his *Force of Truth* a solemn declaration, which he renewed in every subsequent edition till his death, that "every thing he had experienced, observed, heard, and read, since the first publication of the work, had concurred in establishing his most assured confidence, that the doctrines recommended in it were the grand and distinguishing peculiarities of genuine Christianity." Of the importance of such a declaration we may judge from the following anecdote. "When the *Force of Truth* first came into my hands," said an excellent and learned person, "at a time when I did not at all concur in its doctrines, the first thing which it occurred to me to ask was, 'What has been the subsequent history of this man? He tells us of one great change: he may have made many more since.' Receiving a satisfactory answer to this inquiry, I was prepared to pay a more serious attention to his arguments."

His great judgment also appeared in his so studiously contemplating, with a view to preclude objections, the different bearings of his sentiments, and the limitations necessary to be put upon what he advanced, that, while no one would ever charge him with temporizing, he never drew forth an avowed opponent, except, I think, in one instance, which neither deserved nor obtained the least public attention.

The preceding remarks relate to the powers of his understanding: those which follow pertain more to the temper of his heart.

Mr. Wilson has observed, that "love of the world was not his fault;" that "disinterestedness was a feature of his character;" that he did not "talk

against covetousness and the love of the world, while the bent of his conversation was worldly, and his tempers selfish." This is most true: but it is not all that deserves to be said upon the subject. I must give it as my deliberate judgment, which I think will be sanctioned by the suffrages of those who most closely observed him, that of all the men I have known, he manifested the most unfeigned and practical belief of those numerous scriptures, which pronounce riches dangerous to the welfare and salvation of the soul; and that, in consequence, acting upon his own favourite maxim, that what is best for the soul is *really* best for us, he ever looked upon worldly possessions with a jealous eye, for his family as well as for himself. Particularly he deprecated the idea of *clergymen* aspiring at wealth; meaning by that term much more moderate property than some would understand by it. His sentence at the beginning of his religious career will not be forgotten: "We are *to live at the altar*; but a *living*, a bare decent maintenance, without any avaricious or ambitious views of advancing ourselves or our families, or hankering after indulgences should content us." He acted on this principle through life. Subsequently we have heard him declare, that "if a man have faith strong enough, and urgent occasions call for it, he may perhaps do as well for his family if he expends what he has to spare in judicious charities, as if he lays it by:" and again that, "in some cases he should think it right to make a point of disposing in charity of at least as much as was laid by—and this," he adds, "I call *seed corn*." Yet it should be observed, that he had a great objection, where it could be

avoided, to public collections being made for a clergyman's family after his decease. The necessity for this, he thought, should be guarded against by all fair means. Nor should it be supposed, that he in any way reflected upon clergymen who were born to wealth, or on whom providence otherwise conferred it, if only they made a proper use of it. *Aspiring* after it was what he condemned.

Agreeably to these sentiments, we have seen him expressing a strong disapprobation of ministers encumbering themselves with lucrative academies, and losing perhaps the sacred character in that of tutors. He had, if possible, a still stronger aversion to their aiming at rich marriages. A marriage with a rich wife is, I believe, what none of his sons would have ventured to propose to him. Few things would have alarmed him more for their safety; or more grieved him as a dereliction of the principles with which he had laboured to inspire them. Often have we heard him descant with satisfaction on the case of Mr. Walker of Truro, who declined a connexion with a lady, in all other respects suitable, because she possessed £10,000! and often mention the sarcastic congratulation offered at a visitation by a dignified clergyman to an evangelical brother who had married a lady of fortune, "Aye, aye, brother —, we all aim at the same object, though we have our different ways of attaining it!" Hence, when many years ago two young ladies of large fortune were placed under his care, it was one of his counsels to them, that neither of them should marry a clergyman: "for," said he, "if he is not a good one, he is

not worthy of you; and, if he is a good one, you will spoil him."

And all that we have been now relating was held, it should be observed, and persisted in by one who had felt more than most men the inconveniences arising from the want of money, even as an obstruction to his great and good designs.

All this must appear sufficiently extraordinary to those who form their notions from what is current, not only in the world, but in the visible church. To "worldly-wise men" it will no doubt even seem extravagant. But so did our Lord's doctrine upon the selfsame subject: "The Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided him:" ἔξεμυκτήριζον, they *snuffed* at him, in scorn and derision. It cannot be wondered at, if those to whom the *rule* would appear extravagant, should esteem the *practice* which is conformable to it to be so: and, inverting the proposition, it may be feared that those who so judge of the *practice*, would have judged in like manner of the *rule*, had it not proceeded from an authority to which they are accustomed to defer.

Let it not, however, be supposed that while I vindicate, as well as record my father's sentiments, I pretend to have risen to the level of them myself. To describe, and even to approve, is one thing; to follow, especially *passibus æquis*, is another.

But it was not only under the form of *the love of money* that he guarded against a worldly spirit: he was equally jealous of it in every shape. The reader will not have forgotten how he *rejoiced with trembling* at a very slight degree of credit obtained by one



of his sons at the university. To the same son he also remarked, that, though he did not tell him so at the time, it had been one object in selecting his college, to send him where he would *not* be likely to get a fellowship. And, though he gave or procured for all his sons an university education, yet so studiously did he exclude every other view than that of their going forth at once, like himself, as humble parish priests, that I believe I may say, they entered upon life almost without having conceived the idea of those more lucrative and more envied openings which an university may sometimes present.

It may not be improper here to add, that, as my father wrote only for usefulness, and neither for gain nor fame, he always published his works at as low a price as he could at all afford them, that they might be accessible to the humble class of readers. Repeatedly indeed this price turned out to be *lower* than he could afford. Once, in a letter, he remarks concerning his Bible, as a matter of calculation, "I find that my five pound book would make fifty of ——'s ten shillings' book:" yet the book in question was not one of the dearest specimens we have seen. Without, however, wishing to reduce others to his own standard in this respect, he certainly felt a degree of disgust when he saw the desire of money-getting so evidently stamped upon religious publications, calculated for general instruction, as to confine their utility to those who could pay somewhat extravagantly for it.

In a man acting upon such principles, much liberality in his dealings, and an ample charity in proportion to his circumstances, would naturally be

expected: nor would the expectation be disappointed by the fact. Towards servants, labourers, and the poor, he always acted in the most kind and even bountiful manner. He expressed his approbation of Mr. Berridge's advice, who said to country clergymen, "Keep a barrel of ale in your house, and when a man comes to you with a message, or on other business, give him some refreshment, that his ears may be more open to your religious instructions." It was always likewise his maxim, that we ought to support during sickness, or when worn down with age, those of whose services we had had the benefit during their health and strength. Hence at his death he bequeathed, out of the little property he had to leave, an annuity of 12*l.* to one who had spent above thirty years in his service; though she had eventually married from him.

On one particular mode of his charities (an instance of which has indeed come under our notice,) we may again hear the lady, to whom we were indebted for the account of his Sunday labours. "One more particular," she says, "I have to note, which always gave me pleasure, as proving the union of judgment and benevolence, namely, the cases of —, and —, and others. Circumstances not allowing of unassisted pecuniary relief, your good father and mother received into their house, while others contributed to their support, those who would otherwise have pined in solitude and neglect: an example I should like to see imitated in the habitations of many pious persons, as a means of doing more extensive good than many expensive institutions. And it can scarcely be doubted, that the prayers of those, so fa-

voured, have had their share in drawing down the blessings which have descended on the family.”

But, indeed, in all his pecuniary transactions, while he guarded against profusion, there was a certain “largeness of heart”<sup>1</sup> about him, which highly adorned his profession. *What is that betwixt me and thee?*<sup>2</sup> was a sentence frequently in his mouth, wherever small matters were concerned. And in this connexion the testimony borne soon after his decease, by the farmer from whom he received all his income as rector of Aston, may be quoted as of much weight: “Never,” said he, “was there any thing mean, little, or selfish, about Mr. Scott.”

In all respects he was a man of remarkably open temper: and, though this might occasionally produce him some uneasiness, he always thought such a turn of mind, accompanied by a tolerable share of prudence, carried a person through more difficulties than it created him.

Another particular to which I would a little further advert is, his close adherence to the scriptures; his constant recurrence not only to their instructions, for the determination of important questions of truth and duty, but to their example, as the best standard even upon very inferior points. Perhaps the more insignificant the instance I give, the more effectually may it illustrate what I state concerning the extent to which this practice was carried. On this ground I mention the following. He once took a momentary prejudice against a writer's speaking of himself in the plural number, rather than simply using the pronoun *I*: and I was somewhat amused to find

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings, iv. 29. <sup>2</sup> Gen. xxiii. 15. See the chapter throughout.

him immediately trying his sentiment by scriptural usage. "How, said he, "do the inspired writers speak?" Their sanction of the practice objected to, I presume, satisfied his mind; as no more was heard of the objection; nor is it, probably, remembered by any one but myself.

Not only his general benevolence, but his catholic spirit towards all pious Christians, however separated from him in unessential things, deserve particularly to be commemorated. This was manifested in the fervency of his prayers for them; in his readiness, wherever he could with propriety do it, to second their efforts to do good; in his cordial joy in their success, and sympathy in their disappointments; and in the habits of intimate friendship, and, as we have seen, of confidential correspondence, in which he lived, with some, from whom he differed on points which he did not think unimportant. He could avow his sentiments, and allow them to avow theirs, where they disagreed, and yet could love them as brethren, united in far greater things than those which divided them. Accordingly the following lines were, soon after his death, in a manner honourable to both parties, applied to him, in print, by a neighbouring Baptist minister, of whom he had not scrupled sometimes to complain, as making injurious inroads upon his flock:

"To sect or party his large soul  
Disdain'd to be confined;  
The good he loved of every name,  
And prayed for all mankind."

And here I may be allowed to say a few words concerning his Calvinism. May I not be bold to appeal

to great numbers, whether they must not admit the subject of these memoirs to have been a very different character, as to morals, temper, the practical nature of his views of Christianity, concern for the salvation of all mankind, and his whole manner of *addressing* men, in order to the promotion of their salvation, from what they are ready to suppose a decided Calvinist must be? Where will they find greater benevolence, greater strictness, and greater exertion, than have been here exhibited to them? Will they admit the fact, but contend that all this was a happy inconsistency with the principles which he had embraced? He himself, at least, steadily maintained the contrary, and affirmed that his principles naturally tended to a much higher degree of universal goodness than he could ever give himself credit for having attained: and it is certain, that all his more distinguished brethren, who shared with him the reproach of Calvinism,—such as Newton, Henry Venn, Robinson, Cecil, Milner, Richardson, and many others—concurred in this conviction of the practical tendency of their doctrines; which they all likewise exemplified, in their own lives and conversation, in a manner not likely to be soon surpassed.—To what end then do I direct these observations? to the promotion of Calvinism properly so called? No: but to evince that Calvinists are not necessarily so far removed from all that is Christian, as some persons seem ready to suppose they must be.

For myself, I confess that I am little disposed eagerly to contend for any peculiarities of Calvin's creed: but of one thing I feel perfectly sure, that the sentiments of antipathy, involving apparently a

mixture of aversion and contempt, which are sometimes expressed for persons holding Calvinistic sentiments, can only reflect disgrace on those who cherish them. Many speak and write as if the admission of such doctrines were the result of predilection, and arose from some malignity towards the great mass of mankind, inherent in the breast. Those who embrace them stand, by the very fact of their so doing, (like the primitive Christians, and with equal reason,) *odio humani generis convicti*. But nothing can be a greater violation of all justice than thus to treat men, who show the greatest benevolence and practical charity towards their fellow creatures; who, many of them, (like the subject of this work,) long stood out against the admission of the obnoxious tenets in question, and never admitted them till compelled to do so, contrary to all their apparent interests, by submission to what they at least conceived to be the paramount authority of God's word; and who themselves have often felt more keenly, it is to be apprehended, than those who most bitterly censure them ever did, the painful reflections which some of their principles appear calculated to excite.—But the fact is, many of the best and greatest men of our own church, and of other establishments, through successive ages, have avowed the doctrines which are now made the ground of so much reproach; and could many illustrious worthies, who in former times filled the highest dignities of our church with the greatest honour, now return upon earth, they must according to certain modern regulations, (hitherto, I am happy to say, but partially adopted,) be rejected even from the humblest curacies!

But I forbear—and, quitting the general subject of my father's character, proceed to mention some of the *habits* of his life.

It may be interesting to some persons to know his usual mode of spending his time, when exposed to no peculiar interruptions.

Unlike most men who have accomplished great things in life, he was never, till quite his latter years, an early riser. This indeed might be sufficiently accounted for, by the disturbed nights which he often passed, owing to his asthmatic complaint. He usually rose about seven, and retired to rest about eleven o'clock. But during some late years he rose frequently between five and six. At these times he often spent three hours alone in his study before breakfast. His seasons of private devotion were always, I believe, immediately after rising, and again from eight to nine o'clock in the evening. There were times also in which he had periods of retirement in the middle of the day: and occasionally he observed days of fasting and more special devotion.

After breakfast, followed his family exposition and worship, which often occupied three quarters of an hour, or even still more time. He next, while he had missionaries or other pupils under his care, applied himself to their instruction: and then pursued his own studies till near the hour of dinner. His time for exercise and for making his pastoral visits was generally the afternoon. For some years his chief exercise was the cultivation of his garden; but latterly, from the necessity of a recumbent posture, much of the time which he had been used to give to this employment was passed upon his bed.—

After tea, he was again occupied in his study till the hour for family worship arrived: after which a light supper, followed by a little conversation, closed the day.

He was, as Mr. Wilson has observed, “always employed, but never in a hurry.” His method of “gleaning,” as he termed it, by always having a book at hand for spare portions of time, he himself has described and recommended in letters which have been inserted. But he *gleaned* by conversation with all who came in his way, upon such subjects as they understood, as well as from books. He thought it of much advantage to a clergyman to understand common affairs, particularly those connected with the employments of his people. “When they saw that he understood things belonging to *their* profession, it would make them,” he said, “give him credit for more competency to instruct them in what pertained to his own.” Indeed his active mind employed itself vigorously upon all subjects which came before it; and particularly upon the passing events of the world, as they affected the interests of the Christian church, or of his country, and the consequent duties of himself and his people.

Till his spirits had been completely worn down by labours and infirmities, he possessed great cheerfulness and vivacity; which especially displayed themselves in times of sickness. He was a man of much conversation. All his studies and pursuits were talked over with his family. He was indeed always and every where *διδασκτικὸς*, “apt to teach:”<sup>1</sup> we might even be ready to term him, as St. Paul was termed, *σπερμολόγος*,<sup>2</sup> if that word may be taken,

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. iii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xvii. 18.



as our version appears to take it, for one who scatters his words, like seed all around him. In confirmation of this the scenes of the Margate packets may be recalled to mind. I will mention also another incident which, though it may appear trivial, will illustrate my position, and his character.—In one of my journeys to Aston, I took with me, as nurse-maid, a young woman of but slender capacity, though I hope of good principles; and it amused and interested me to learn that this poor girl, when charged with the care of a young child, could find no way of passing her time so agreeably, as in standing or walking about near my father, while he worked in his garden. He so explained to her his various operations, and the intended result of them, with appropriate observations, that her attention was quite engaged. And by means resembling this it was, that his domestics gradually acquired a degree of information, which made them appear enlightened persons in comparison with what is generally found in that rank of life. And hence too it was, as well as for the great spiritual benefit which most of them derived from his instructions, that, without contracting a disrespectful familiarity, they became attached to him in a very uncommon degree.

In this connexion I may mention what has left a pleasing and affecting impression upon my memory from my early days. His returns from visiting his late flock at Ravenstone, when he lived at Olney, were always interesting occasions, while he talked over with my mother all that he had observed in their state. At these times, I suppose from sympathy with his hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows respecting

them, it was very gratifying to me to stand by, a silent listener to the conversation.

In like manner the peculiar piety, cheerfulness, and affection which marked the discourse that took place on a Sunday evening, (notwithstanding the very discouraging circumstances against which my father so often had to contend,) early made a strong impression upon my mind of the *happiness* of true religion.

Generally I may say, that he was very strict about the observance of the sabbath in his family. All domestic work, that could be anticipated, was done the evening before: and cooking on the Sunday was avoided, that the whole family, if not otherwise prevented, might attend public worship. Yet, as may be collected from the fact just related, his piety was cheerful as well as strict.

“Improv’d and soften’d by the day,  
All things another aspect wore.”

In one respect a deficiency may have been felt in these memoirs: my father never, I believe, at least never since a very early period, wrote any private papers, relative to what passed in his own mind. Pious persons have differed in judgment upon this practice. His judgment was not against it: but it was not his habit. Nor has he left any writings beyond what are now printed, which can be communicated to the public; unless it be additional letters in the hands of his friends.—At the same time that I make this remark, I may be permitted to observe, that he much deprecated the publication of such letters, unless (what he apprehended might not be attainable,) they could be previously submitted to per-

sons in whose judgment he could confide. He thought that the memory of many good men had been injured by such publications.<sup>1</sup>—I confess it is with some trepidation, as to what might have been his own judgment upon the subject, that I now lay so much of his private correspondence before the public: but all, I persuade myself, will feel that I have given them much that is truly valuable: and, under the sanction and authority which death has added to his character, he may now speak *some* things publicly, which perhaps propriety or expediency required that he should before say only in private to his friends. If I have in any important instance exceeded that moderate licence which this consideration would allow, there is nothing for which I should feel more unfeigned regret.



I gladly avail myself of the permission to annex, to this review of my honoured father's character and manner of life, the testimony of two friends, the competency of whose judgment none will call in question, and who will be free from that suspicion of undue partiality which must necessarily attach to myself.

The first of the following letters was addressed to me, when I announced the event which had just taken place at Aston Sandford.

“Golden Square, April 20, 1821. My dear sir, The mournful event, which you were pleased to communicate to me, excited less surprise than con-

<sup>1</sup> See his Practical Observations on Deut. xxxiv.

cern, as Mr. Webster had prepared me to expect an unfavourable termination of your pious and excellent father's illness. Although his departure has been delayed to a good old age, and he was cut down as a shock of corn fully ripe; yet the loss of him must be painfully felt by all who had the advantage of knowing him, and who knew how to esteem and love him for his work's sake. The church is deprived of an able and useful minister, who has long been a burning and a shining light in the midst of her: his people have lost a faithful and laborious pastor, whose zeal, diligence, and serious concern for their eternal interests, will never be surpassed: his friends have lost a wise, upright, disinterested, and affectionate counsellor, on whose judgment and integrity they could always rely: and his family have lost all that can be comprised in a great, good, kind, and tender relative. His works will long live to praise him here, and, through the divine blessing, may be instrumental in adding to his felicity, and increasing the glory with which the Redeemer has already crowned his aged and laborious servant.

“ You, my dear sir, can better exemplify, than I can express, the duties of faith, and patience, and meek submission, which are required by this afflictive dispensation of the divine providence. May it please God to communicate that support and consolation, which will enable you to comfort those around you! Above all, may you have grace to persevere in the path by which your now blessed father has ascended into the mansions of perfection and happiness, and abundantly supply the loss which the world has sustained, by receiving a double portion of his spirit! . .

“ The friends of my youth, and of my mature age, are now few in number ; and every year deprives me of some to whom I was tenderly united. Their departure warns me that my own is advancing rapidly upon me. Pray for me, my dear sir, that *I may obtain mercy of the Lord in that day.*—I am, my dear sir, with great respect and regard, truly and affectionately yours,

JOHN PEARSON.

“ *The Rev. John Scott, Aston Sandford.*”

The other excellent and distinguished friend of my father, when I informed him of the work in which I was engaged, most kindly proposed, of his own accord, “ publicly to declare the unfeigned respect he felt for him,” which, he said, he should have “ real pleasure in doing :” and, when the occasion called for it, he favoured me with the following highly gratifying letter :

“ Marden Park, 16th April, 1822.—My dear sir, It was with no little pleasure that I heard that you were about to publish an account of the life of your late excellent father, together with many of his letters. The life of a minister of the gospel is not indeed likely to abound in those incidents which might render it interesting to ordinary readers ; but to those who read for moral improvement, or still more, with a view to Christian edification, the life of your late father cannot but be eminently attractive. The labours of his pen, blessed be God, have been so widely circulated as entirely to supersede the necessity of any other testimony to the superiority of his intellectual powers, or to the soundness and extent of

his religious wisdom. To the still higher praise of having exhibited and illustrated in his life and conversation the religious principles which he professed, you would yourself bear abundant testimony. But the eulogium of a son may be not unreasonably suspected of partiality: from that suspicion my favourable testimony will be free. It is not much however that I am able to state: not at least so much as the general impression on my mind of your father's character had led me to anticipate. The uniform discharge of the most important duties, the daily exercise of the Christian tempers, though they justly secure respect and engage affection, supply, even to a biographer, little that is substantive or specific: yet for the gratification of my own feelings, if not for the illustration, still less for the accrediting, of his character, permit me to state the decisive judgment of his intellectual and moral qualities, which an acquaintance of five and thirty years' duration had enabled me to form.

“ It was in the winter of 1785-6 that the late Mr. Newton informed me that the Rev. Mr. Scott, a clergyman of a very superior understanding and of eminent piety, more peculiarly remarkable for his thorough acquaintance with the holy scriptures, was about to settle in London, having been appointed to the chaplaincy of the Lock Hospital.

“ This was a period of my life when it was peculiarly important to me habitually to attend the ministrations of a sound and faithful pastor; and I willingly assented to Mr. Newton's earnest recommendations of Mr. Scott. I soon found that he fully equalled the strongest expectations that I had

formed of him, and from that time for many years I attended him regularly, for the most part accompanied by my dear friends,—both, alas! now gone to a better world,—the Hon. Edward James Eliot and Mr. Henry Thornton. We used to hear him at the Lock in the morning; Mr. Thornton and I often gladly following him for the afternoon service into the city, where he had the lectureship of Bread Street church. All objections arising from an unfavourable manner were at once overruled by the strong sense, the extensive acquaintance with scripture, the accurate knowledge of the human heart, and the vehement and powerful appeals to the conscience, with which all his sermons abounded in a greater degree than those of any other minister I ever attended. Indeed the substantial solidity of his discourses made those of ordinary clergymen, though good and able men, appear comparatively somewhat superficial and defective in matter. His zeal, together with his labours and indefatigable energy, could not but be manifest to all who had ever so little knowledge of his life and character. But, through the medium of a friend who resided some time under his roof, I had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with his conduct, temper, and manners, in family life. These I can truly declare were such as to indicate his constant reference both in his conduct and temper, to the very highest moral standard, and a mind singularly watchful against what he conceived to be his own besetting infirmities. In particular I well remember it was stated to me, that, if in the course of the day he had been betrayed into what he deemed an improper degree of warmth, with a measure of humility rarely

to be found in any man, much less in one who could not but be conscious of his own superior powers, he would mention the circumstance, and implore forgiveness of his infirmity in the evening devotions of the family.

“ Were I required to specify the particular Christian principles which shone most conspicuously in his character, I should mention his simplicity of intention, his disinterestedness, and his generous contempt of this world’s wealth in comparison with those heavenly treasures on which his heart was supremely set. He conceived it to be peculiarly the duty of a Christian minister to be a pattern of disinterestedness, and to render it clear that he was governed by higher motives than those of worldly gain or advancement.—It may be an illustration of this part of his character, that, in opening his heart to a friend on the marriage of one of his children, he expressed his gratification that the lady had no fortune.—Never indeed did I know any one in whom the grand governing principles of a true Christian appeared to rule more powerfully and habitually.

“ It was with no little regret that a change of residence, which took place on my marriage, rendered me a less constant attendant on Mr. Scott’s ministry. But Mrs. W. and I always congratulated ourselves when an opportunity of hearing him occurred. When your father quitted the neighbourhood of London, I was one of the many who deeply regretted his departure, though my concern was lessened by the hope that a country residence might prove serviceable to his health, and be the means of prolonging a life of almost unequalled usefulness. I need not assure you



that, the esteem and attachment I felt for him experiencing no diminution, I continued to take a deep interest in his well being; and though I heard with concern that one, for whom I felt so sincere a friendship, should suffer such a long continuance of severe bodily pain, yet I could not but feel that it was to the honour of this aged servant of God, that, as when in the possession of his bodily strength he had been enabled to exhibit a model of what a Christian minister should be, so that he had done it no less in his declining years, by the patience and humility with which he bore his bodily sufferings, and the diligence with which he never failed to improve every remaining bodily and mental faculty for the glory of God and the edification of his fellow creatures.

“Large indeed was the harvest he was allowed to gather in; many are the works which have followed him; and rich, doubtless, will be his remuneration, on that day when he shall hear the blessed address which I could for very, very few, anticipate with equal confidence, *Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*—I remain, with real esteem and regard, my dear sir, your faithful servant,

W. WILBERFORCE.

“*The Rev. John Scott.*”



One more topic remains to be adverted to in this chapter, to which reference has been already made; namely, my father's sentiments concerning education.

On this subject he will himself have disappointed the hopes of many readers, by the closing sentence of his own narrative; and I am sensible that it will

not be in my power to relieve the disappointment. At the same time I would remind such persons, how many valuable hints they may collect from various letters which have been laid before them ; and likewise how great weight there is in the sentence referred to, when interpreted as he would understand it. “ The grand secret ” of my success, he there says, “ appears to have been this, that I always sought, for my children as well as for myself, IN THE FIRST PLACE, *the kingdom of God and his righteousness.*” In his view, this would extend not only to the instruction directly given, and the prayers offered on behalf of his family, but to his whole conduct respecting them ; to the spirit and behaviour habitually exhibited before them ; to the value practically and evidently set upon eternal, in preference to temporal, things ; and very particularly to the disposal of them in life—the places of instruction to which they should be sent, the families which they should visit, the connexions which they should form, and the openings which should be embraced or rejected for them.

“ Many of us,” says Dr. Paley, “ are brought up with this world set before us, and nothing else. Whatever promotes this world’s prosperity is praised ; whatever hurts and obstructs and prejudices this world’s prosperity is blamed : and there all praise and censure end. We see mankind about us in motion and action ; but all these motions and actions directed to worldly objects. We hear their conversation ; but it is all the same way. And this is what we see and hear from the first. The views which are continually placed before our eyes regard this life

alone and its interests. Can it then be wondered at that an early worldly-mindedness is bred in our hearts, so strong as to shut out heavenly-mindedness entirely?" All this strikingly illustrates, *by contrast*, what is meant in the sentence on which we are commenting. How far the censure conveyed bears upon the *practice* of many families in which religious *instruction* is not neglected, those concerned must judge for themselves. "It is seriously to be apprehended," my father observes, in one of his last publications relating to the state of the times, "that remissness in family religion, relaxation of domestic authority, and the adoption of *worldly maxims* in the education and disposal of children, constitute a considerable part of the *sins of the church* in the present day, as distinguished from the sins of the irreligious part of the nation."—Such was his judgment. What was his practice, the same distinguished writer just cited may be said to have described, when he proceeds: "that religion therefore may not be quite excluded and overborne, may not quite sink under these powerful causes, every support ought to be given to it, which can be given by education, by instruction, and, above all, by the example of those, to whom young persons look up, acting with a view to a future life themselves." Or rather his conduct is more adequately described by the nervous language of the inspired apostle: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."<sup>1</sup>

The deficiencies, of which my father speaks in the

same closing sentence of his narrative, were mainly owing, I conceive, to the want of time for more particular instruction and superintendence, which was inseparable from the constant pressure of engagements under which he lived. Yet here, as Mr. Wilson observes, there was that in his character and conversation which “instructed his children better than a thousand set lessons.”

But, though I avow my despair of satisfying the expectations of some friends on the subject of the present section, I have one document to lay before them, which I trust they will accept with indulgence and read with interest. It is a memorial of *a part* of what passed at Aston, at our family meeting there, before mentioned,<sup>2</sup> in the year 1818, as preserved in a letter to an absent brother. It may be remembered, that one object then proposed was, that our revered head might deliver to us, perhaps for the last time, “such hints, especially on the management of our families, as should occur to him, and as might tend, under the blessing of God, to make us in some degree such blessings to our children, as, we trusted, he had been to us.” Of these hints some will be found to correspond to each part of the sentence which introduced the present observations.—My memorandum is as follows :

“My father then took up the subject which had been proposed to him, and the text named as an introduction to it, Genesis xviii. 19, expressing his sense of its vast importance, and that particularly as it applied to us, in our situations, and with our families. I can give you but brief hints of what he said, but

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 472.

they may recall to your recollection his strain of thinking and speaking on such points.

“ He first used the most humble expressions concerning his sense of the insufficiency and imperfection of what he had done himself: that people asked him what were the rules, and schemes, and plans, which he had adopted and pursued; but that really he had been always too much involved in his many engagements, to pursue any very regular scheme or system in the education of his children: and he ascribed the success, which he hoped had attended him, to God’s blessing on steady upright aims and intentions, rather than to the wisdom of his plans and the competency of his rules.

“ 1. One thing that he could look back upon with satisfaction, and which he would earnestly inculcate, was, that he had ever decidedly *sought* FIRST *the kingdom of God and his righteousness* for us, as well as for himself; and this not merely in his prayers, but in his instructions, and in disposing of us in life. He had been, he observed, most of his time poor; and in London he could have found many opportunities of getting his children *off his hands*, and even of putting them *forward in the world*; but he determined not to avail himself of them, but rather to keep his children under his own roof as long as he could. For his sons his heart had been set upon the ministry,—perhaps too fondly; though, as we knew, it had always been his maxim, that, while he would rather see us faithful ministers of Christ than princes, yet he would rather we were shoeblocks than clergymen in office but not in heart: and he had been unwilling to relinquish the hope that we should answer

his desires, for the sake of any more lucrative prospect that was presented.

“ 2. He would enjoin, Whatever else you teach or omit to teach your children, fail not to teach them *subjection*; and that to the mother, as well as to the father. This, he said, is as essential to their own welfare, temporal and eternal, as to that of the family, the church and the state. Establishing authority, (which is perfectly consistent with kindness and affection,) so that, from childhood, they shall not think of deliberately opposing a parent’s will,—of having or doing what he disapproves; this is the greatest safeguard that can be placed about young persons. Subjection to authority is God’s ordinance; essential, in addition to all other considerations, to the belief and practice of religion. If it were true, that there were more pious women than men, he would ascribe it very much to this circumstance, that they are more habituated to restraint and subjection.

“ Here I took the liberty of bearing, to the juvenile part of the company, my testimony to the great value and advantage of the discipline under which, particularly in this respect, we were brought up; while I see, among pupils, and in many religious families, the prevalence, and the sad consequences of an opposite practice. There was no want of affection, on the one part, or of confidence, on the other, in my father’s family: but there was an awe of parental authority: any thing, to which he could not freely consent, was *out of the question* with us; at least this was the case to a considerable degree. This is a preservative from a thousand sins and follies and miseries, to which those young persons who have

an unsubdued will of their own are exposed. I heartily wish we may all, by God's blessing, succeed in establishing the same system in our families.

“ 3. He enforced, as of great importance, the forming of *habits of application*. The idea of teaching every thing as play or entertainment, could it be realized, would sacrifice, he observed, the great moral benefits of education. The difference between work and play should be felt; and the proportion of the former to the latter gradually increased. The habit of application is of vastly greater importance than any particular branch of learning which is to be acquired by it.

“ I will here subjoin the remark of a wise man, Mr. Richardson of York, who said, ‘ It seemed to him, that the wide difference, existing among families brought up under the same religious instruction, was, in a very main degree, to be traced to some being trained to *industrious habits*, and some not.’

“ 4. To such of us as have pupils from wealthy families, it might, my father proceeded, be particularly important to point out, what he had always wished to keep in our view, when we were young, that our children were not to consider themselves as on a footing with all, with whom they might associate. Many things might be proper for their companions, in the way of dress, expense, &c. which would be highly improper for *them*, on account of their different situation and prospects in life. This, he observed, was ever to be kept in view by the families of ministers especially: and children should therefore be habituated to the consideration from the first.

“ Connected with this, the subject of accepting

invitations for our children, to pay visits to friends, deserved much attention, and sometimes occasioned much difficulty. Such calls should be complied with sparingly, and with much care. Even where the families to which they might be invited were unexceptionable in all other points, than that of superior station or fortune, yet the different style of living would often be of itself a sufficient objection, where the youthful mind was concerned. Wanting to be *genteel* frequently proved a great snare to families circumstanced as our's were.

“ 5. On the subject of teaching children *religion* he had in some degree altered his opinions. He had done too little, he was convinced, in the way of teaching us catechisms, prayers, and portions of scripture by heart; not only from the want of time, but from a fear, beyond what was warranted, of producing formality: and he apprehended that there still prevailed an error on this head, among many persons, agreeing with us in our general sentiments. Observation of *facts* had produced the change in his judgment. He had lived to see, to how good account a pretty large measure of such instruction might be turned; particularly storing the mind with passages of scripture for future use. He would have the memory, while tenacious, as in children, *preoccupied* with such matter; without, however, rendering it burdensome.

“ He had not attempted a great deal in the way of talking directly to children, and drawing them forth to talk, upon religious subjects; but much he trusted, by family worship, and the constant reading and expounding of the scriptures: much also, he



hoped, by the conversation kept up in his family, and by the spirit of supreme regard to religion, which he had endeavoured to maintain. This he pressed upon our particular attention with reference to our children.

“ To the effect of his general conversation I gave my testimony, by observing, that the knowledge, which I had found turn to most account in life, appeared to have been gathered up, gradually and imperceptibly, from what thus passed in his family.

“ He urged the improvement of passing events, occurrences relating to our own conduct and that of others, as the occasions of religious remark, illustrative of scriptural truths; teaching young persons to take a religious and Christian view of whatever took place.

“ If surrounded by a young family, he said, his expositions would be somewhat varied from their present form: they would be less full and minute, and, as far as he found it practicable, more suited to arrest and impress the youthful mind. He would also make a point of having evening prayer at such an hour, that the younger branches of the family (from seven or eight years of age,) might be present, as well as in the morning. He much recommended extemporary prayers in the family, glancing at existing circumstances, in preference to any fixed forms; especially among young persons.

“ 6. He pressed the importance of gaining the affections of our children; drawing them to choose our company, to enter into our conversation, and to make us their confidants.

“ 7. He expressed his hope, that there might be

little need to say to us, *Let brotherly love continue*; but, said he, let every thing be done to train up your children also to union and cordiality: let them be guarded, and taught themselves to guard, against whatever might violate it. There will be different turns of mind: there will be occasions tending to excite jealousy, envy, and grudging: but let the demon of discord be watched against, as the deadliest foe to a family. Respectability, happiness, usefulness, all depend on its exclusion. *A threefold cord is not easily broken*; but a divided house cometh to desolation.

“ My father concluded with prayer for all present, and for all those belonging to us who were absent; for us and our children after us, and our children’s children, to future generations, if there should be such; that religion might not decline, and become extinct among us, but that all might prove (like Abraham, who had furnished our text,) *blessed* ourselves, and *blessings* to others.

“ After the prayer, I took his opinion on the subject of introducing young persons to the sacrament of the Lord’s supper; which I was the more desirous to do, from knowing his sentiment, that it is an ordinance for the edification of believers, not for the conversion of sinners. I observed, that I trusted we had seen good effects result, in many instances, from encouraging young persons to come, who appeared hopeful and promising; who showed feeling, and an apparent desire of religious improvement; though we could not arrive at a decisive judgment concerning their piety. He fully acquiesced in this, and expressed his approbation of inviting the attendance of such

persons, with proper explanations, and when it meets their own desire. He thought it often proved a deciding event with them, and the means of fixing them. The distinction was marked between *such* an approach to the Lord's table, and persons coming merely because they have attained a certain age, and have been confirmed: as likewise between coming in order to establish a satisfaction with what they *are*, and using it as a means of being made what they *should be*."

A striking amplification of some parts of the preceding paper may be found in a note of my father's on a passage in the Pilgrim's Progress, where Demas, who "loved this present world," is introduced with the epithet *gentlemanlike* attached to his name. After some excellent remarks on the effects arising from the affectation of gentility in persons in trade, he thus proceeds: "But none are in this respect so much exposed as ministers and their families, when, having no private fortune, they are situated among the affluent and genteel: and, by yielding to the temptation, they are often incapacitated from paying their debts with punctuality; they are induced to degrade their office by stooping to unsuitable methods of extricating themselves out of difficulties, from which strict frugality would have preserved them, and by laying themselves under obligations to such men as are capable of abusing this purchased superiority; and, above all, they are generally led to place their children in situations and connexions highly unfavourable to the interests of their souls, in order to procure them a genteel provision. If we form our judgment on this subject from the holy scripture, we

shall not think of finding the true ministers of Christ among the higher classes in the community, in matters of external appearance or indulgence. That information and learning, which many of them have the opportunity of acquiring, may render them acceptable company to the affluent, especially to such as love them for their work's sake; and even the exercise of Christian tempers will improve the urbanity acquired by a liberal education, where faithfulness is not concerned. But if a minister thinks, that the attention of the great or noble requires him to copy their expensive style of living, he grievously mistakes the matter. For this will generally forfeit the opinion before entertained of his good sense and regard to propriety: and his *official* declarations concerning the vanity of earthly things, and the Christian's indifference to them, will be suspected of insincerity, while it is observed that he conforms to the world, as far or even further than his circumstances will admit: and thus respect will often be changed into disgust. Nay indeed the superior orders in society do not choose to be too closely copied, in those things which they deem their exclusive privileges; especially by one who (they must think,) secretly depends on them to defray the expense of the intrusive competition. The consistent minister of Christ will certainly desire to avoid every thing mean and sordid, and to retrench in every other way rather than exhibit the appearance of penury: but provided he and his family can maintain a decent simplicity, and the credit of punctuality in his payments, he will not think of aspiring any higher. If, in order to do this, he be compelled to exercise con-

siderable self-denial, he will think little of it, while he looks more to Jesus and his apostles than to the few of a superior rank who profess the gospel: and, could he afford something genteel and fashionable, he would deem it more desirable to devote a larger portion to pious and charitable uses, than to squander it in vain affectation."

In addition to the observations here detailed, the reader may be referred for a further explanation of my father's views on education to the twenty-first of his Essays, which treats of the relative duties.

On the subject of "establishing authority," (which was to be accomplished early,) he used to observe that it generally cost him a sharp contest, sometimes more than one; but that, when it was once settled who was master, the parent and not the child, the path was ever after comparatively smooth and easy.

On correction, he was decided as to its propriety and necessity, as the appointment of God. At the same time he thought it need by no means be frequent, if it were properly administered. He would not have it applied for small faults; for what resulted from childish levity and inconsideration; but only for what was wilful, rebellious, or immoral. "A child," he observed, "was to be punished, not for being a *child*, but for being a *wicked* child." Of course he taught that chastisement was to be applied coolly and with deliberation, to fulfil a duty painful to our feelings, not for their gratification.

It was a rule with him, that, from the time children became capable of making their wants known in any other way, they were to obtain nothing by crying for

it, or by any other misconduct. The contrary practice, he said, was bribing them to behave ill.

He much lamented to see parents so often inverting the proper course to be pursued, leaving their children almost without restraint when young, and then attempting to impose too severe restrictions upon them when grown up. Each error was highly pernicious; the combination of the two, of most ruinous consequence.

A lady who was for a considerable time resident in his house, and who has very successfully brought up her family by rules principally derived from him, mentions in a letter two circumstances which particularly struck her in his management: one was his "never resenting misconduct in any way when the contest was over. I used to admire," she says, "his being so soon kind again to the offender. This I judge to be important, though it may seem trivial." The other was, "his plan of letting his authority go by imperceptible degrees, as his children grew up. In this," she remarks, "he excelled, I am ready to say, even his management in childhood: and the observation of many unhappy cases, arising from a contrary course, has convinced me of its great importance. He would have been a wise father, even had he not been a religious one; just views were so obvious to his wise mind. I think the dissatisfaction, which you tell me he expresses in the close of his narrative, arose from his not having had great opportunity of comparing his plan with those of others, and of observing how miserably many children have been brought up. There is however a great improvement, at least in

my circle. I take the opportunity of speaking of him in every company into which I go, when there is a young mother present."

The same friend notes the following rules as laid down by him. "Fix authority under four years old.—The only way of dealing with children is to convince them, 'If I do not do as I am bidden I shall suffer for it.'—Never let an offence pass unnoticed under the fatal idea, that they will know better when they are older."

With these rules may be combined the following observations of a young person, who passed a considerable time under his roof. "One thing which struck me much in his behaviour towards young persons was this: he never teased and worried them about little things. The contrary conduct gives to many parents the appearance of always finding fault; renders their children uncomfortable in their presence, and destroys all confidence. When I had been at Aston two months, I had more confidence in Mr. S. than many sons can ever feel towards their own fathers.—Another thing was, that he steadily showed his disapprobation of things in proportion to their contrariety to God's law, and not to the effects which happened to follow from them. For example: a child is doing what is forbidden, as throwing stones: little notice is perhaps taken till he breaks a window, and then he is punished for the mischief he has done, and not for his disobedience. This Mr. S. not only condemned, but he never seemed to be betrayed into it."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### HIS WORKS—HIS THEOLOGY—CONCLUSION.

“THE characteristic excellency of his writings,” Mr. Wilson says, “is a calm, argumentative, determined tone of scriptural truth; a clear separation of one set of principles from another; a detection of plausible errors; an exhibition, in short, of a sound, comprehensive, adequate view of Christianity; such as goes to form the really solid divine. His motto may be conceived to have been, *Knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.*”

I. On my father's first work, the Force of Truth, and on his principal work, the Commentary on the Scriptures, Mr. Wilson has spoken with sufficient copiousness in what has been already inserted from his sermons.

I may be allowed however to remark it, as showing a very different state of feeling upon such subjects from that which now exists, that a narrative so striking in itself, as the Force of Truth exhibits, and one so strongly tending to support what, amid unceasing obloquy and opposition, are contended for as the great doctrines of the reformation and of the holy scriptures, should for a long time have attracted so little attention. Ten years, it has been seen, passed before a thousand copies were sold. Yet, several years before that period had elapsed, it had been translated into a foreign language and published on the continent.



I subjoin a well known instance of the effect of the work on a character which has much interested the public mind. "About this time Mr. Piggott, the curate of St. Mary's, Nottingham, hearing what was the bent of his (Henry Kirke White's) religious opinions," namely, 'inclining towards deism,' "sent him, by a friend, Scott's Force of Truth, and requested him to peruse it attentively; which he promised to do. Having looked at the book, he told the person who brought it to him, that he could soon write an answer to it; but about a fortnight afterwards, when this friend inquired how far he had proceeded in his answer to Mr. Scott, Henry's reply was in a very different tone and temper. He said, that to answer that book was out of his power, and out of any man's, for it was founded upon eternal truth; that it had convinced him of his error; and that so thoroughly was he impressed with a sense of the importance of his Maker's favour, that he would willingly give up all acquisitions of knowledge, and all hopes of fame, and live in a wilderness, unknown, till death, so he could insure an inheritance in heaven. A new pursuit thus opened to him, and he engaged in it with his wonted ardour." †

To what Mr. Wilson has said concerning the Commentary, I would annex the opinion expressed by the late Rev. Andrew Fuller—"I believe it exhibits more of *the mind of the Spirit* in the scriptures, than any other work of the kind extant:" and the following testimony borne by the author of the "Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures." Having quoted Mr.

† Southey's Life and Remains of H. K. White.

Wilson's account of the work, Mr. Horne adds: "To the preceding just character of this elaborate Commentary, the writer of these pages (who does not view all topics precisely in the same point of view with its late learned author,) deems it an act of bare justice to state, that he has never consulted it in vain on difficult passages of the scriptures. While occupied in considering the various objections of modern infidels, he, for his own satisfaction, *thought out* every answer (if he may be allowed the expression,) for himself, referring only to commentaries in questions of more than ordinary difficulty: and in every instance—especially on the Pentateuch—he found in Mr. Scott's Commentary brief but solid refutations of alleged contradictions, which he could find in no other similar work extant in the English language."

The only observation which I shall myself make relates to the leading principle of interpretation adopted in the work, which appears to be of this kind; that every passage of scripture has its real, literal, and distinct *meaning*, which it is the first duty of a commentator, whether from the pulpit or the press, to trace out and explain; whatever *application* he may think fit subsequently to make of it: and that, speaking of the scriptures generally, the *spiritual* meaning, is no other than this *real* meaning, the actual *intention* of the passage, with its fair legitimate application to ourselves. The author looked, therefore, with a very jealous eye upon the whole scheme of *accommodation* so much in favour with many persons, which takes a passage often without even a reference to its connexion and real purport,

and applies it to somewhat to which it has no actual relation, and perhaps does not even bear any analogy. —A few extracts from my father's writings will best illustrate his views.

In the preface to his Commentary he briefly notices the subject, in explaining the plan upon which his own work proceeds, and the reasons that led to its adoption. But the fullest explanation of his sentiments is to be found in two papers in his collected "Works." The first was published in the Theological Miscellany, for 1786, in reply to a query concerning the passage, Eccles. ix. 13—15, which describes "a certain poor man, who, by his wisdom, delivered his city," but was "no more remembered" by the citizens. Some persons have had the fancy of applying this to our redemption by Christ, and the returns which we make for the benefit. On this he says: "In explaining the word of God, we should remember that there is in every portion one precise meaning, previously to our employing our ingenuity upon it, which it is our business, with reverent attention to investigate. To discover that meaning, we should soberly and carefully examine the context, and consider the portion in question in the relation in which it stands."

Then, having pointed out the useful practical lessons suggested by the plain meaning of the story in question, he proceeds: "I would gladly know by what authority any man, overlooking these plain useful instructions, by the help of a warm imagination, sets himself to find gospel mysteries in this passage? . . . It would puzzle the most ingenious of these fanciful expositors fairly to accommodate the

circumstances of the story to the work of redemption. Two purposes indeed, such as they are, may be answered by such interpretation: 1. Loose professors are encouraged in their vain confidence, by hearing that none of the redeemed are more mindful of, or thankful to their Saviour than themselves. . . . 2. It is a powerful engine in the hands of vainglorious men, by which to catch the attention, and excite the admiration of injudicious multitudes, who ignorantly admire the sagacity of the man that finds deep mysteries, where their more sober pastors perceived nothing but unrelishing practical instruction. . . . . I have heard many sensible and pious persons lament this sort of explication of scripture, as an evil of the first magnitude: and I am more and more convinced it is so. At this rate you may prove any doctrine from any text: . . . . . every thing is reduced to uncertainty, as if the scripture had no determinate meaning, till one was arbitrarily imposed by the imagination of man: . . . . the most important doctrines of the gospel seem to lose their beauty and glory, along with their simplicity, in the midst of such useless encumbrance: and the most conclusive arguments lose their effect, and become suspected, by the company which they keep: and, whilst the sophistical proof is detected, the opposer is emboldened to treat the rest as equally capable of refutation. . . .

“ However men may admire the sagacity of these expositors, it certainly shows a very lamentable state of the organs of sight, when a man can see nothing obvious, useful, real, and capable of being pointed out to others for their benefit; but, blind to these things, sees every thing through a different medium

than others, and in such a manner as can furnish only amusement instead of information. It is very improperly called *spiritually* explaining the scripture. The spiritual meaning, is the meaning of the Spirit of God, which is generally simple, and obvious to the humble inquirer. Opposite to this is the *fanciful* meaning, which always appears forced and unnatural, to sober minds; diverse and opposite to men of opposite parties and lively imaginations; and only excites admiration by being surprising and unexpected. . . . Thus the parable of the good Samaritan is evidently intended to explain and enforce the great commandment of loving our neighbour as ourselves, by showing, in a lively example, how every personal and party consideration is to be overlooked; and safety, ease, interest, and indulgence hazarded or renounced, to rescue a fellow creature, though an enemy or stranger, in the hour of distress. Christ indeed, having in his life and death perfectly fulfilled this law, and far exceeded all that can possibly be required of any other person, because of his peculiar character, circumstances, and suretyship engagements, hath inexpressibly outdone the good Samaritan. But even this is accommodation; and the practical inference, *Go thou and do likewise*, demands our peculiar attention. But now, if ingenuity and imagination are employed to bend every circumstance of this parable to the situation of fallen man, and the love of Christ; and this is given as the primary or only meaning, whilst the practical instruction is kept back; the reader or hearer may be amused or disgusted, as he favours or dislikes the doctrines of grace; but,

whatever edification he may receive, he has not that which our Lord principally intended by the parable.”

The other document which conveys his sentiments on the subject before us is a letter to a highly-esteemed brother clergyman, who consulted him concerning the publication of a sermon on the signs and duties of the times, in the year 1799, from the text, Nahum ii. 1. He writes as follows :

“ If I had not considered you in a very different light, from that in which I do some preachers, in whose sermons imagination and accommodation predominate, I should have evaded the question, or declined giving an answer. . . . Your sermons always have a *good tendency* ; as such, I must give my approbation, leaving every man to his own method of attaining his object ; though I may think that method is not the best of which he is capable. . . . When you take a plain text, full of matter, and, from the *real* meaning of the text, raise doctrines, draw conclusions, explain, illustrate, and apply the subject, there is great weight in your manner of preaching ; which the fertility of your invention and liveliness of your imagination, kept in due bounds, render more interesting to the *many*, without giving just ground of umbrage to the *few*. But, it appears to me and to others, that you frequently choose texts suited to give scope to the fancy—which is constituted the interpreter, instead of the judgment ; and that you thus discover allusions, and deduce doctrines and instructions, true and good in themselves, but by no means contained in the text, nor, indeed, easily made out in the way of accommodation. In this case, your own

vigour is principally exerted in the exercise of the imagination: and, while many hearers are surprised, amused, and delighted, their understandings, consciences, and hearts are not addressed or affected, by any means in so powerful a manner as by a plainer subject.

“ What St. Peter says of prophecy, that it is *not of private interpretation*, is true of every part of scripture: the Holy Spirit had, in every part, one grand meaning, and conveys one leading instruction; though others may, by fair inference, subordinately be deduced. This is the real *spiritual meaning*, which we should first of all endeavour to discover, as the foundation of all our reasonings and persuasions. We should open, allege, argue, enforce, and apply, from this *mind of the Spirit* in scripture; nor is any passage fit for a text, properly speaking, which does not admit of such an improvement of it, in its real meaning. But that, which you seem to call the ‘spiritual meaning,’ is frequently no more than a *new* meaning put upon it by a lively fancy.—Typical subjects, indeed, have a spiritual meaning, and in another sense, under the literal meaning; being intended by the Holy Spirit, to shadow forth spiritual blessings under external signs; and some prophetic visions are enigmatical, and the spiritual meaning is the unriddling of the enigma.—Parables, and such parts of scripture as the Canticles, are of the same nature. But, in all, the judgment should be the expositor, not the fancy; and we should inquire what the Holy Spirit meant, not what we can *make of it*. But there are many scriptures that have no other meaning, than the literal; and which are to be im-

proved, not by finding out a new meaning and calling it *spiritual*, but by trying what useful instruction we can deduce from the plain sense of the passage.”—He then applies these principles to the particular passage in question. But for that application, the reader must be referred to the paper itself.—He concludes, “My dear sir, I am so deeply convinced, that this way of accommodation is capable of very dangerous abuses, and has been so abused to very bad purposes, by those, who make divisions and deceive souls, that I grieve when any person of real piety and respectability gives countenance to it: and I have so high an opinion of your integrity, benevolence, desire of glorifying God, and of doing good, and of your talents likewise, if properly exerted, that I have long wished to discuss the subject with you.”

II. Next to the Force of Truth, one of his earliest publications was the Discourse on Repentance: and this may be considered as the first of a series of Theological Treatises, including The Warrant and Nature of Faith, the Treatise on Growth in Grace, the Sermon on Election and Final Perseverance, the Essays on the most Important Subjects in Religion: to which we may add the volume of Sermons on Select Subjects, the Four Sermons, and the Notes on the Pilgrim's Progress.

The first of these works is a most serious, affectionate, and impressive address on a subject which appeared to the author, at the period of the publication, to be peculiarly neglected, and which, he thought, was seldom so much insisted upon as it ought to be. The instances, in which the work is known to have been productive of the happiest effects, are numerous.



Though a plain, practical composition, it exhibits much of that which distinguished the writer's views of Christianity. He insists strongly on the immutable obligation of the divine law, its equity as well as purity, and the inexcusableness of transgression, notwithstanding the fallen state of human nature; marks the connexion of repentance with faith, with forgiveness of sin, and with every part of religion—exposing the unsoundness of that religion in which it does not bear even a prominent place; and distinguishes between faith and personal assurance in the same manner as he always continued to do.—Of the strictness of his practical system, the reader may judge by what he has said, in speaking of the nature of repentance, on the subjects of restitution; dealing in smuggled or contraband goods; and the case of bankrupts.

The occasion of the “Warrant and Nature of Faith” has already been in some measure explained. In that work the author may be said to attempt to hold the balance between certain excellent men at home—Marshall, Hervey, Romaine—in whose sentiments concerning faith and assurance, and some other points, he could not concur; and the New England divines—particularly Edwards and Bellamy—whom he held in high estimation, but who, he thought, had raised a prejudice against their own writings by pushing some things too far, and thus “throwing impediments in the sinner's path, when endeavouring with trembling steps to come to the gracious Saviour,” “and condemning many as self-deceivers, whom God would own as real, though weak believers.”

The work consists of two parts: one of which

maintains, that the word of God, independently of any personal qualifications, is the sinner's only and sufficient *warrant*, or authority for exercising faith in Christ; and assigns reasons for insisting on this position: the other asserts the *holy nature* of true faith in all cases, and that it is the *effect* of regeneration; and alleges distinct reasons for insisting upon these positions as well as the other. In speaking of the nature of faith the author is careful to impress the sentiment, that it always connects with a humble earnest *application* to the divine Redeemer for salvation; which he does in order to distinguish it from a mere *inert reliance*, with which he apprehends many deceive themselves. He also discriminates between faith and personal *assurance* of acceptance with God, which he "not only grants, but strenuously maintains, that no one is warranted" to cherish, "except as he has clear proof that he is *in Christ a new creature*: and *has crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.*"

Much of the book is employed in establishing what, to a mind not corrupted from scriptural simplicity by speculation or controversy, might not seem to require proof: but the general result will be found very important: of which, I think, the pious reader may be fully convinced, by turning, previously to his perusal of the whole, to the introductory and the concluding pages.

The small Treatise on Growth in Grace has been a favourite with some of its author's most distinguished friends. In this work, the origin and progress of "the love of God" in the human heart are well traced; a comprehensive account is given of Christian love,

in general; and the question of Christians "leaving their first love" is discussed. Christian zeal is also considered, and the notion of love (instead of the law of God) being our *rule*: and the temper and character of the ripe and mature Christian are admirably delineated. This tract, it will be remembered, was composed for the benefit of the beloved people whom the author had recently left at Ravenstone, and in the neighbourhood of Olney.

Of it, perhaps, in particular it may be remarked, what appears to me true of his writings in general, that, while they carefully avoid certain extremes which have been countenanced by some good men of a different school, they present the peculiar excellencies of the New England divines, relieved from a certain forbidding aspect which their writings wear to the inexperienced reader.

The Sermon on Election and Final Perseverance is of a very moderate and practical cast. Had these doctrines been always exhibited in the manner here exemplified, prejudice must have been much abated, and many arguments employed against them must have been felt to be irrelevant. The author expressly undertakes to show that they are "consistent with exhortatory and practical preaching, and conducive to holiness of life." Different opinions will be formed of his success in this undertaking: one thing, however, is most evident, that, in asserting what he deemed to be one part of scriptural truth, it never entered into his plan to give up another part, or in the least degree to throw it into shade.—What may appear to some a peculiarity of the sermon, though that must be ill intitled to such a name, which is

common to almost all Calvinistic churchmen, to many dissenters, and to the principal American divines, is its maintaining, in connexion with its other doctrines, that of Christ's having died for all men, or, in other words, of general, or universal redemption. It may deserve also to be remarked, that the author adduces, in this discourse, as most exactly expressive of his sentiments upon this subject, a part of the Church Catechism, which the present Bishop of Winchester, several years afterwards, brought forward in one of those charges which formed the ground-work of his "Refutation of Calvinism," as decisive proof that the Church of England rejected the doctrines in support of which the sermon is written. The part of the catechism referred to is that, which affirms that God the Son "redeemed all mankind," and that God the Holy Ghost "sanctifieth all the elect people of God:" placing the limitation not on redemption but on sanctification; or, as some have expressed it, not upon the *impetration*, but upon the *application* of redemption.

Before we quit this publication, I would observe that, firmly as the author held the doctrines of personal election and final perseverance, he continued to the end of life, as he had done in his Force of Truth, to place these tenets in a very different rank from those of human depravity, justification by faith, and regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. The latter and not the former, whatever any may choose to impute to him, constituted the substance of his divinity and of his teaching; as they do of those of the clergy with whom he is usually classed. We have found this as strongly stated in his private

correspondence as it can be in any public documents either of his, or of those who, from their *avowing* less Calvinism than he did, are represented as being less honest. We have seen him not only adopting Mr. Newton's sentiment, that, though Calvinistic principles were to diffuse an influence over all our instructions, they were, generally speaking, to be found no where *in the lump*;<sup>1</sup> but also writing to a friend, If you find any thing too Calvinistic for you in my works "you must *skip it*;"<sup>2</sup> and even saying of Mr. Wilberforce's book, "It is not Calvinistic—perhaps it is so much the better:"<sup>3</sup>—that is, it may the better answer the purposes for which it was written. And, at the close of this very "Sermon on Election and Perseverance," he thus declares his sentiments concerning bringing these doctrines forward in the pulpit:

"And now in applying the subject I would observe that, while numbers argue with the greatest vehemence against the points in question, and groundlessly charge them with implying the most dishonourable thoughts of God, and tending to the most pernicious consequences; others are ready to say, in extravagant zeal, to any one of greater moderation, 'If you really believe these doctrines, why do you preach them so sparingly, cautiously, and practically?' I would desire such a man carefully to study even St. Paul's Epistles, and to answer the objection himself. Perhaps he may find that there is not a less proportion on such subjects in our sermons and publications, than in his writings; and that he as carefully guards them from abuse, and connects them as much with holy practice, as we can

<sup>1</sup> Above, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 452.

<sup>3</sup> Above, p. 347.

do. We generally meet with a few verses in an Epistle upon the doctrines in question; a much larger proportion upon the person, love, and sufferings of Christ, and on faith in him; and whole chapters upon a holy life and conversation: and, if we do not in the same manner proportion, guard, and connect them, hypocrites will abuse them, infidels will despise them, and the weak will be stumbled. Indeed they are not at all proper subjects to insist on, when we preach to sinners, to prejudiced hearers, or newly awakened persons; and are seldom if ever found in scripture explicitly thus addressed: yet a great part of our more public ministry is exercised among such persons. Let it not then be thought *carnal policy* to adapt our discourses to the occasions and wants of the hearers, while nothing inconsistent with truth is spoken, nothing profitable kept back. Our Lord himself says, *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now*: and Paul writes to some, who were prone to be *wise in their own conceits*—*I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal: I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it: neither yet are ye now able*: and he gives a reason for this conduct, which proves that many in most congregations are not able, namely the prevalence of *strife* and *contention* among them.”

The volume of *Essays* is too well known to need any extended remarks. The author himself speaks of it as containing “a compendious system of the Christian religion, according to his views of it:” and

Mr. Wilson describes it as “incomparable for the plain exposition of truth.” It is close, and full of thought perspicuously and forcibly expressed; and perhaps no where, within the same compass, can the reader be referred to more copious, sound, and important religious instruction. I would point out particularly the second Essay, on the Importance of Revealed Truth, and on the reception of it upon the authority of Him who has revealed it; the third, on the Scriptural Character of God; the fifteenth, on the Uses of the Moral Law in subserviency to the Gospel; the eighteenth, on the Disposition and Character of the True Believer; the twentieth and twenty-first on Relative Duties; and the twenty-third on the Improvement of Talents; as characteristic, and peculiarly valuable.—One delightful instance of the usefulness of this work, in the case of a literary and philosophic character, who was by its means reclaimed from sceptical principles, and established in the practical and effectual faith of the gospel, has since the author’s death, been announced to the world in the brief memoir of Thomas Bateman, M.D.<sup>1</sup> But this is only one among many proofs of the happy effects of his writings.

In speaking of his Volume of Sermons, and of his Four Sermons, which may be connected with them, I shall not presume to enter into any examination of his pulpit composition. The subject has already been touched upon both by Mr. Wilson, and in the letter which I had so much pleasure in inserting at the close of his Character. He is allowed to

<sup>1</sup> Christian Observer, Nov. 1821: since published as a separate tract, with some additions, by Butterworths, Fleet-street.

have been defective in style and manner, and in some other qualities, which might have rendered his discourses more attractive, both to the hearer and the reader: but it would not be easy to point out a preacher whose sermons carried in them greater weight of matter, or who more excelled in “rightly dividing the word of truth,” giving to every character “his portion in due season.” I confess it always appeared to me, that, while he was the strictest and most practical preacher I could hear, he was also the most consolatory; because he not only pointed out where comfort was to be had, but what was the legitimate mode of appropriating it. By always describing the character for whom it was designed, and that with great condescension to the feelings of the humblest upright Christian, he enabled those to whom consolation belonged to perceive their interest in it.

The design of his volume of Sermons was thus explained by himself, in a preface not retained in the later editions: “To show the absolute necessity of evangelical principles in order to holy practice, and their never-failing efficacy in sanctifying the heart, when cordially received; and to exhibit, according to the best of the author’s ability, the nature and effects of genuine Christianity, as distinguished from every species of false religion, without going far out of his way to combat any of them; is the especial design of this publication. But he has, at the same time, endeavoured to explain, establish, and enforce his views of the gospel in that manner which was deemed most likely to inform the mind, and affect the heart, of the attentive and teachable reader.”

In commenting on *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, he has



not only illustrated more fully and distinctly, than had ever before been done, the various scenes and characters of that ingenious and most instructive allegory; but has found ample scope for unfolding and enforcing those views of religion for which he always pleaded, and in which he appears to have entirely coincided with his author. In his preface, and in the *Life of Bunyan*, he thus speaks of the original work: "The accurate observer of the church in his own days, and the learned student of ecclesiastical history, must be equally surprized to find, that hardly one remarkable character, good or bad, or mixed in any manner or proportion imaginable, or one fatal delusion, by-path, or injurious mistake, can be singled out, which may not be paralleled, as to the grand outlines, in the *Pilgrim's Progress*." Yet "the author was only thirty-two years of age when he was imprisoned;" (in which situation he wrote this work:) "he had spent his youth in the most disadvantageous manner imaginable; and he had been no more than five years a member of the church at Bedford, and less time a preacher of the gospel;" and during part, at least, of his tedious imprisonment of twelve years, he had "no books, except a Bible, and Fox's *Martyrology*."—One specimen of the notes has already appeared in this work.

### III. Occasional Sermons.

Of these, seven are funeral sermons, on Dr. Conyers, Mr. Thornton, the Rev. Messrs. Newell, Pentycross, and Barneth, Lady Mary Fitzgerald, and the Princess Charlotte. In most of these discourses he speaks not much of the individuals; but notices the excellencies of their characters only in a general

way. In that on Dr. Conyers, a change of manner, as compared with his preceding publications, may be traced, which would not be favourable to popularity. There is an increase, or even excess of comprehensiveness, but a diminution of animation. Indeed he complains in a letter, that it cost him more than usual trouble to reduce this sermon to writing, after having preached it. The Sermons on Mr. Thornton, Lady Mary Fitzgerald, and the Princess, have already been sufficiently noticed. That on Mr. Newell contains a copious and beautiful illustration of the text, "To me to live is Christ," &c., to which great stores of scriptural knowledge are made to contribute. Both this discourse and that on Mr. Pencycross display the practical workman, the minister that "watches for souls," in the manner in which the subject is brought to bear upon the various descriptions of persons concerned in the event to be improved. The latter particularly considers the *εξβασις*, "the end of the minister's conversation," spoken of in the text, Hebrews xiii. 7, 8. That on the missionary Barneth describes the Christian "hero," in the very spirit of the character itself, and is rich in scriptural illustration.

His Sermons on national occasions are also seven in number: namely, Fast Sermons in 1793, 1794, and 1796; and Thanksgiving Sermons in 1784, 1798, 1802, and 1814; to which may be added his tract on the Signs and Duties of the Times, in 1799.

Three principles pervade all his publications of this description: 1. That the proper business of national fast-days is humiliation before God for our sins as a people and as individuals: and that of national thanksgiving-days, the acknowledgment of

God's unmerited mercies to us: 2. That the national guilt, which draws down divine judgments upon us, is the aggregate of individual transgression, to which we have all contributed our full share: 3. That whoever be the instruments or means, both calamities and deliverances are to be considered as coming from the hand of God; and that it is *his* part in them, with which alone we are concerned *on these occasions*. "Humiliation for sin," he observes, "or gratitude for unmerited blessings, has nothing to do with approbation or disapprobation of men or measures." Thus he declines all political discussion; (not including, however, under that description, such an inculcation of the duties owing from subjects to their rulers, as is expressly enjoined on Christian ministers;) avoids taking the side of any party; rejects all declamation against the sins of our enemies; and makes the whole bear, as a personal concern, on every individual.

On this whole class of his publications I would remark, that, whereas it might be thought an uninteresting task to read over these *obsolete* fast and thanksgiving sermons, I have by no means found it so. On the contrary I think it impossible for the well-disposed mind to peruse them, without very gratifying and very beneficial impressions; especially when the subsequent course of events, and in particular the history of religious and benevolent institutions, is retraced in connexion with them.

Sermons preached for institutions of this description are the only ones which remain to be noticed.

That before the Church Missionary Society, in 1801, is a very copious discourse on the question of

Missions, in which, among other topics, the view which the scriptures present of the state and prospects of the heathen is considered, and it is affirmed, that to think so well as many profess to do of their condition is a virtual denial of Christianity; and that contrary sentiments concerning their state, so far from being the dictate of uncharitableness, have been the source of all the practical charity which has been exercised towards them.—That before the London Missionary Society, in 1804, is a very animated and effective address on the command, “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.” In it the author observes of himself: “An early acquaintance with the writings of President Edwards, Brainerd, and the New England divines, gave my mind a peculiar turn to this subject. The nations unacquainted with Christ have ever since been near my heart: and I never thought a prayer complete, in which they were wholly forgotten. This was the case several years before societies for missions (that is, new societies in England) were established: but I could do no more than offer my feeble prayers.”

His sermon before the London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews, in 1810, is perhaps the most spirited of all his printed discourses. It contains a very interesting illustration of the remarkable prophecy, Zach. viii. 23: “In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.” Nothing could be more unlikely, at the time

this prophecy was delivered, than the fulfilment which it has received, in all the most enlightened nations of the earth becoming worshippers of the God of the despised Jews! Yet the preacher argues, from a comparison of the passage with other scriptures, that it has a still more astonishing, at least a much more extensive accomplishment yet to receive.

The last Sermon of this description is that before the Governors of the London Female Penitentiary, in 1812; which is on “that one single event occurring on earth, that is declared to cause joy in heaven”—a sinner’s coming to repentance.

IV. Works directed against the infidelity and disaffection of the times.—These are the Rights of God, the Answer to the Age of Reason, and the Tract on Government.

The first, it has already been said, gained but little attention; less, I think, than it deserves, as compared with the rest of the author’s smaller works. It is perhaps the best written, in point of style, of all his publications. It is also well argued, and seems suited to the purpose of precluding many of those false reasonings, by which numbers are prejudiced against the scriptures previously to examination; and excuse to their own minds the neglect with which they treat them. It is calculated to obviate infidelity, not by meeting its cavils in detail, but by possessing the mind with principles which would exclude them. It pleads the cause of Christian doctrines not by adducing scriptural proofs, (that would be foreign to the present purpose,) but by defending them against the charge of being so unreasonable as to be rejected without listening to their evidence.

Besides meeting specific objections, the Answer to Paine treats more generally, in as many distinct chapters, of Revelation, Miracles, Prophecy, the Canon of Scripture, Mystery, Redemption, the Insufficiency of Deism, and the Nature and Tendency of Christianity.

The Impartial Statement of the Scripture Doctrine in respect of Civil Government, and the Duties of Subjects, must be allowed, I think, by all candid persons, to be very moderate, wise, and useful; and it is still *seasonable*. It is divided into three chapters: the first containing "Propositions concerning Civil Government as the ordinance of God:" the second pointing out "Things not the duties of Subjects to their Rulers:" and the third, "Duties incumbent on us to our Rulers, and in respect of Civil Government."

On the notion that we are bound to obey only *equitable* laws, and not *all* laws under which we live, that do not require what is contrary to our conscience, the author remarks: "This would render society like an inverted pyramid, constituting all the inferior relations judges over their superiors." And concerning the duty of "honouring the king" he asks: "Who would think that his son *honoured* him, if he allowed his tongue and pen that unbridled licence in animadverting on all his actions, which even some who *seem to be religious* use concerning their civil Governors? Yet the command to honour the king is as express as that to honour father and mother, and as obligatory on every man's conscience."

V. Other Controversial Works: namely, the Answer to Rabbi Crooll on the Jewish question, the

Answer to Bishop Tomline's "Refutation of Calvinism," and, as arising out of it, the History of the Synod of Dort.

The first of these publications has been repeatedly adverted to in letters written while it was in preparation, and inserted in a former part of this work. It may here be remarked that, besides following the tract which gave occasion to it, from page to page, and answering its objections, or meeting its arguments as they arise, (a mode of reply, which, it must be confessed, combines with some advantages an apparent want of arrangement,) it discusses, in a distinct manner, the following principal questions and subjects:

1. 'Was the Messiah, predicted in the Old Testament, to have an immediate human father?
2. 'Was he to be a mere man or not?
3. 'At what period was his coming to take place?
4. 'What are we to understand by "the times of the Gentiles?"
5. 'What have been the effects of Christ's coming on the state of the world?'—answered in a very forcible and interesting manner.
6. 'The triumphs of Jesus compared with those of Mohammed;' particularly in three points, 1. 'The state of the countries in which their first successes were respectively obtained: 2. The nature of the religion propagated by each: and, 3. The means by which the triumphs of each were gained?'—This was the author's favourite section, and it is certainly very striking. It treats the subject more in detail than is usually done.

7. 'Whether the Messiah was to be the Messiah of Israel only, or of the Gentiles also?

8. 'How far and in what cases miracles are a proof of a divine mission?

9. 'Was the Messiah's kingdom to be spiritual or absolutely earthly?

10. 'The Priesthood of the Messiah.

11. 'The reception which he was to meet with from the nation of Israel.

12. 'The death which he was to suffer, and the end to be answered by it.'—Here striking remarks are made on Isaiah liii, Psalm xxii, and other scriptures.

13. 'His resurrection, subsequent glory, and kingdom.'

All these questions are, of course, discussed from the Old Testament alone. The subjects also of sacrifices, the oral law, or traditions, and several others come under consideration.

Of the work generally, the Christian Observer, for 1815, thus speaks: "Should it prove the *cycnea vox*, the dying note of this truly great man, which we trust it may not, we shall say much for this publication if we pronounce it worthy to be so; and state it to be inferior neither in matter nor temper to any of the truly Christian productions of his powerful mind."

On the Answer to the "Refutation of Calvinism" I shall do little more than transcribe the opinion which Mr. Wilson has given, in notes annexed to his funeral sermons. "It appears to me," he says, "incomparable for the acute and masterly defence of truth." And again: "The effects of these great qua-



lities"—decision, activity, and childlike submission to divine revelation—"are observable in every part of our departed friend's writings. They are full of thought; full of 'the seeds of things,' as was said of Lord Bacon's works. The ore dug up from the mine is not unalloyed indeed, but it is rich and copious, and well worthy of the process necessary to bring it into use. Take as an instance, 'The Remarks,' which, in the second edition, I venture to call one of the first theological treatises of the day; it is pregnant with valuable matter, not merely on the questions directly discussed, but on almost every topic of doctrinal and practical divinity."

It is needless to say, that they are not the mere peculiarities of Calvinism which are defended in this work: had such been the only points assailed, it would probably never have appeared. "But, in falling foul of Calvinism," the volume which gave occasion to it offended grievously against Bishop Horsley's caution, to beware of "attacking something more sacred, and of a higher origin—even what belongs to our common Christianity:" and hence the answer takes equally wide ground.—To the Christian temper, and respectful style in which it is written, the learned prelate concerned is said, I believe upon good authority, to have done justice.

The learned and candid head of Oriel College, Oxford, also, in quoting from this work a passage to which all who engage in religious controversy would do well to take heed, terms the author "one of the most pious and temperate writers" among modern Calvinists, and says of him, "whose truly Christian sentiments I always admire, although his opinions upon the

main doctrine under consideration"—that of predestination—"appear to me mistaken and dangerous."<sup>1</sup>

The little work on the Synod of Dort arose out of the preceding publication. The account of the Synod commonly received in this country is that furnished by the prejudiced Peter Heylin, who gives the abbreviation of the articles by Daniel Tilenus, instead of the articles themselves. His statements are taken upon trust, and repeated by one writer after another, in a manner little creditable either to their diligence or their candour. My father, finding these abbreviated articles in the Refutation of Calvinism, remarked upon them in the first edition of his answer, as if they had been authentic, and thus, as he says, "erroneously adopted and aided in circulating a gross misrepresentation of the Synod." The discovery of his mistake led him to a more full investigation of the subject, and thus to translate and give to the public, 1. "The History of preceding Events" which led to the convocation of the Synod: 2. "The Judgment of the Synod," concerning the five controverted heads of doctrine: 3. "The Articles" of the Synod: 4. "The Approbation of the States General:"—subjoining his own remarks on each part. The translation is made from the "Acts" of the Synod published by authority;<sup>2</sup> a work which, it is worthy of remark, is never alluded to by either Mosheim or his translator

<sup>1</sup> Copleston on Necessity and Predestination, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> The edition used on this occasion is entitled, "Acta Synodi Nationalis, in nomine Domini nostri Jesu Christi Auctoritate D. D. Ordinum Generalium Fœderati Belgii Provinciarum Dordrechtii Habitæ, Anno 1618 et 1619. Dordrechtii, 1620. 4to. Editions were printed the same year at Dort and Leyden in folio, and at Hanover in quarto.

Maclaine, though they refer to various other writings, on both sides, apparently of a less authentic character. The following reasons are assigned for the publication before us: 1. "That a very interesting and important part of ecclesiastical history has been obscured and overwhelmed with unmerited disgrace, by the misrepresentations given of the Synod and its articles, especially in this nation:" 2. That the author wished "to prove, that the doctrines commonly termed Calvinistic, whether they be or be not the doctrines of scriptural Christianity, may yet be so stated and explained, without any skilful and labour-ed efforts, as to coincide with the strictest practical views of our holy religion, and so as greatly to encourage and promote genuine holiness:" 3. That "in a day when these doctrines are not only proscribed in a most hostile manner on one side, but deplorably misunderstood and perverted by many on the other side, he desired to add one more testimony against these misapprehensions and perversions, by showing in what a holy, guarded, and reverential manner the divines of this reprobated Synod stated and explained them, compared with the superficial, incautious, and often unholy and presumptuous manner of too many in the present day:" 4. That he also "desired to make it manifest, that the deviations from the creeds of the reformed churches, in those points which are more properly called Calvinistic, is seldom for any length of time kept separate from deviations in those doctrines, which are more generally allowed to be essential to vital Christianity." 5. That he "purposed, by means of this publication, to leave behind him in print, his deliberate judgment on several controverted

points; which (judgment) must otherwise have died with him, or have been published separately,—for which he had no inclination.” The controverted points referred to, are principally those relating to toleration, religious liberty, terms of communion, and other ecclesiastical questions. To his sentiments here delivered on these subjects, we may apply what he himself has said of the kindred ones contained in another publication, to be noticed immediately, they are such as “will not please the bigots of any party.”

In this work (page 172,) he delivers a strong opinion on the subject of what is miscalled Catholic emancipation.

In the present class we may perhaps range the only separate publication which remains to be noticed: the Letters to the Rev. Peter Roe on Ecclesiastical Establishments, adherence to the Church of England, &c. with a Tractate annexed on the Religious Establishment of Israel. The last he esteemed to be novel: at least, he observed, it was quite new to himself. The principle which it chiefly goes to establish is, that the conduct of the pious kings and governors of Judah,—Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah—in their exertions for promoting religion among those under their command, which are sanctioned by the unqualified approbation of scripture, “was not adopted in obedience to any part of the ritual or political law of Moses;” but was nothing more than that improvement of their talents, which would be incumbent upon any persons now occupying similar stations, and “was intended as an example for kings and princes, professing Christianity to imi-

tate." That spirit of moderation, which, the writer anticipated, would render these letters distasteful to zealots on all sides, will make them the more acceptable to fair and reasonable men; and they will probably be deemed by such persons better suited to plead the cause of the established church, by their not taking it up on too high grounds.

Besides these works, my father was the author of many detached papers in various periodical publications, some of which are to be found in the fourth volume of his collected works; and a specimen of them has been introduced in speaking of the general principle of interpretation adopted in his Commentary.

Passing from this review of his works to some observations on the general character of his theology, I should say, that its great and distinguishing excellency appears to be—its *comprehensiveness*. It embraces, as far perhaps as the infirmity of human nature will permit, the whole compass of scripture. Like the father of the faithful, he "walks through the land in the length thereof and in the breadth thereof." It would be difficult, I think, to name a writer, who more faithfully and unreservedly brings forward every part of scriptural instruction in its due place and proportion, and is content upon all of them "to speak as do the oracles of God." He sacrifices no one doctrine or principle, nor suffers himself to be restrained in fairly and fully pressing each upon attention, by jealousy for the security and honour of any others. Persuaded that scripture is every where consistent with itself, whether it appears to us to be so or not, he has no ambition to preserve *apparent*

consistency more exactly than the sacred writers have done. Hence he never scruples to unite together those truths of divine revelation which to many appear as if they must exclude one another. He teaches the total inability of fallen man, unrenewed by divine grace, to render any acceptable obedience to God; but he never for a moment suffers himself to be entangled in the reasonings of those, who would on this ground call in question the obligations of the divine law, or forbear to press upon all men the commands and exhortations, which the sacred scriptures do certainly address to them. He teaches that “no man can come to Christ except the Father draw him:” yet he feels no hesitation in connecting with this principle, the invitation, “whosoever will let him come,” the assurance, “him that cometh I will in no wise cast out,” or the inexcusable guilt evidently implied in the charge, “Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.” He believed that God knew whom he had chosen, and that none would eventually attain eternal life, but those whom the Father, by his own purpose and grace, had “given” unto Christ: yet he unequivocally teaches that Christ “died for all” men, and that none fail of being saved by him, except by their own fault. He asserts with unwavering confidence and zeal, that our justification is altogether free, of grace, through faith, “for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ alone,” and in no degree “for our own works or deservings:” yet he equally maintains, that he only “who doeth righteousness is righteous;” seeing all true faith must and will prove itself by its fruits: and insists that we are still under the law as a *rule*, though delivered from it as

a *covenant*. He held that all true believers in Christ are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,” and will certainly persevere unto the end; and yet that “if any man draw back, God shall have no pleasure in him;” and that, if we would ever come to heaven we must “give diligence to make our calling and election sure.”

It is almost needless to observe to how many charges of error on the right hand and the left, this resolute adherence to the whole of scriptural instruction would expose him, at different times and from different classes of men. The anti-Calvinist reproached him for his Calvinism, and the hyper-Calvinist called him an Arminian. The mere moralist trembled for the consequences of his *antinomian* doctrine of justification; while numbers in an opposite extreme considered his insisting upon the evidences of faith, and the general strictness of his teaching, as *legal*, engendering a “spirit of bondage,” and involving a surrender of the freeness of the gospel, and of the privileges of the believer. He however preached and wrote “straight forward,”—according to an expression noticed above: (p. 446 :) he constantly moved on in the course which he saw clearly marked out before him, heedless of conflicting charges which appeared to him evidently directed against the practice of scripture, and not against any unauthorised peculiarity of his own. He was fully of opinion, that the church of Christ had ever been grievously infested by schemes of divinity, of different kinds, formed by setting up a part, often a small part of divine truth, to the comparative neglect, or even exclusion of the

rest:<sup>1</sup> he wished therefore to be constantly comparing his own theology with the *whole* of scripture, and could never be satisfied while any part of the divine oracles seemed not to obtain its due portion of regard, or to require any force to be put upon it to make it comport with its views.

Let it not be supposed to be here implied, that he every where, and on all points, attained to a perfect conformity with the word of God: no one could be more sensible than he was of the error and imperfection which must ever attend all human attainments. But such as has been described was his aim—the object of his incessant study, and unwearied prayers: and the most that is here affirmed is, that he appears to have been a thoroughly scriptural divine, as far perhaps as we can hope to see it granted to the imperfection of human nature to become such.

What has been already stated must virtually include every thing else that I can have to remark on his theology: still there are one or two points which I would notice more distinctly.

I next, therefore, observe that his theology was distinguished by its highly *practical character*:—under which term I include not only its sobriety, moderation, and freedom from refinement and speculation, but especially its holy strictness. The reader will, throughout this work, have observed him complaining of the degree of antinomianism, both theoretical and practical, which was prevalent, and against which he accordingly very much directed his efforts, both from the pulpit and the press.

<sup>1</sup> See letter of May 21, 1796, page 339.



What were his views of the antinomian tendency of much public teaching may receive illustration from the extract of a letter inserted in an early part of his history. (Page 205.) It was not merely where tenets positively antinomian were avowed—where the law was denied to be the rule of duty—where indeed “duty” was declared “not to be a word for a Christian”—where the trial of our faith by its fruits was discarded—but wherever Christians were left uninstructed in their various duties; were only told in general, that they must be holy, while the nature and the particulars of holiness were left unexplained, and little else than doctrines and privileges were insisted on: in all these cases he thought the *teaching* of an antinomian tendency.

*Practical* antinomianism also prevailed, according to his view of things, not only where men were dishonest or licentious under a religious profession, (though many such flagrant instances existed,) but wherever worldliness of mind, luxury, unchristian tempers, the neglect of relative duties, or a slothful and self-indulgent omission of the proper improvement of talents, was allowed under a profession of religion.—He found when he entered upon his course, throughout a great part of the religious world, repentance little insisted upon,—faith represented as very much consisting in personal assurance,—religious professors in general, with little previous inquiry, encouraged and even urged to keep up a good opinion of their own safe state (as it must indeed be every man’s duty to do, if such be the nature of faith; )—the evidence of holy fruits but dubiously required in order to warrant any man’s confidence concerning himself

—the love of God resolved into little more than *mere* gratitude for benefits assumed to have been received (which is easily excited under such a system, upon very fallacious grounds;) particular duties not at all dwelt upon—invitations and exhortations very much neglected, even where their propriety was not called in question. It need not here be said how directly he opposed himself to the whole of this scheme: how he insisted on “repentance, and fruits meet for repentance;” on the sanctifying effects of all true faith, by which alone its existence can be proved; on reconciliation to the divine holiness, law, and government, as well as gratitude for mercies received; and on all the detail of duty—fully and particularly laying open the divine law in its strictness and extent, both for the conviction of the sinner, and for the information of the Christian believer, “how in all things he ought to walk and to please God.” He spoke much of the necessity of *distinguishing* preaching; which should, as clearly as possible, discriminate not only truth from error in doctrine, but the genuine from the spurious in Christian experience, and the sound character from the unsound, among persons professing godliness. In this way he commenced, and he persevered to the end—“abounding more and more;” and he lived to see, under God’s blessing, his exertions crowned with great and extensive success.

But, lastly, though highly practical, the whole of his theology was also strongly *evangelical*:—which term I here use in no sense that any person of common fairness can call sectarian. I mean by it, that the great truths relating to our redemption, and the promises of mercy and grace made to us in Jesus

Christ, were ever prominent in his own mind, and in the whole of his instructions. He never lost sight of them; he never threw them into shade: he *could not* do it: he had that constant and deep sense of their necessity, as the support of his own hopes, and the source of all his strength and vigour for every duty, which would have effectually prevented his keeping them back, or proposing them *timide gelideque*, even if he had not been on principle so decidedly opposed as he was to such a line of conduct. He held, as Bishop Burnet also did, that not even a single sermon should fail of so far developing the principles of the gospel, as distinctly to point out the way of salvation to the awakened and inquiring conscience: and that this would easily be done, by a mind as fully imbued as it should be with Christian truths, without doing any violence to the particular subject under discussion, or even infringing the rules of good composition. And, so far from thinking that a tendency towards an antinomian abuse of the truths of the gospel was to be counteracted by a jealous, timid, scanty, reluctant exhibition of them, he was decidedly of opinion, that nothing gave more advantage to corrupt teachers, than such a plan; which enabled them to appeal to their hearers, that they could be opposed only by a concealment of the fundamental truths of the gospel. He would *guard* these truths, not by keeping them back, but only by proposing them *in connexion* with all the other truths with which they stand combined in scripture. But more than one letter, already inserted, may speak his sentiments upon this subject.<sup>1</sup>—And if the testimony of another

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 202 and 398.

witness be at all called for, we may adduce that of a late venerable person, repeatedly alluded to in this work, Mr. Richardson, of York. Writing of him only a few days before his own death, Mr. R. says, "I had the highest respect for that most useful, laborious, and honest man. He was always practical, but never tampered with the doctrines of grace, which he taught clearly and fully. He is a safe guide, never fanciful, never running into extremes."

On the last head of practical strictness, a hope was expressed, that an improvement had taken place among many of the class of persons called evangelical, since my father commenced his ministry: on the present, may there not be room to suggest a caution, lest we, who have been brought up in familiarity with those great truths, which burst upon some of our predecessors with all the impression of a first discovery, should exhibit them less vividly, and press them less earnestly, than our father's did; lest the gospel of Christ should be diluted, and so far at least adulterated in our hands?



HAVING thus accomplished the task which devolved on me of giving to the public as full and faithful an account, as I was able, of my ever dear and honoured father's life—in doing which I have certainly enjoyed great pleasure, though attended with considerable anxiety,—I shall now take leave of the reader by offering a few reflections on what has passed in review before us.

1. When I turned from the solemnities of his dying chamber, the following thoughts, among many others, forcibly suggested themselves to my mind.

“ Who could stand and witness that scene, without being impressed with the reality and magnitude of those objects which engrossed all his thoughts: about which he had always been deeply in earnest, but which now called forth in him an earnestness greater than ever?

“ Who could contemplate his spirit and temper, the vigour and fervency of his mind, the holy affections which he manifested, and the ardour with which he aspired to a higher state, without *feeling sure*, that he was not going to be extinguished, but, on the contrary, to rise to a superior existence, the blessedness of which surpassed our comprehension?”

To the same purport, may I not now ask, can any one deliberately survey the contents of this volume; the history of him to whom it relates; the whole of his spirit and manner of life; his correspondence, his conversation in the world, and the event of his course; without deriving from it all a most impressive lesson on the *reality and blessedness of true religion*? To say one word on his sincerity in his profession would be utterly impertinent. No one does, no one can call it in question. His religion was not only sincere, it had a deep and most powerful hold upon his mind; it was the all-pervading principle which governed his life. He was every where the same; in his private correspondence, in the bosom of his own family, and in all his intercourse with his friends. The world was every where subordinated, and reduced to a very low rank indeed in his esteem; God and eternity were every thing. Indeed, so profound was the impression, and, at the same time, so wise and consistent the conduct which it dictated, that it was scarcely

possible to observe him, without an inward conviction that he was *right*, as well as sincere; that the principle on which he was acting was sound and well-founded. Irreligion could not but stand abashed in his presence, and pay the homage of conscious inferiority and worthlessness.

The effect produced upon him by his religion was indeed most *powerful*. We have seen that it made him a new man. It subdued his natural pride, and ambition, and love of the world, and selfishness; and turned all the energies of his character into a new channel. Its mighty influence was not only seen in the first great change which it accomplished; but it continued and increased to the end of life; so that patience, and meekness, and gentleness, gradually more and more took place of natural impetuosity and vehemence, till at length they almost wholly supplanted their antagonists.

The influence exerted upon him was, consequently, no less *excellent* and *blessed* than it was powerful. It was blessed, as his own mind was concerned; both at the time, and it was evidently preparing him for higher blessedness, by making him "meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light." It was blessed in all its effects upon his family and near friends, and dependents: who now "arise and call him blessed," and dwell with unspeakable delight and thankfulness on what they have witnessed in him, and derived from him. And it was blessed in all that usefulness which followed from it to multitudes, whose number shall then first be known when they come forth to be "his joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus."

2. Another reflection which forcibly suggests itself, arises from the comparison of his early with his more advanced life; of what he originally was with what he ultimately became. Who, from the consideration of his education, his character, and the circumstances in which he was placed, till more than the youthful period of life had elapsed, would have anticipated his attaining and achieving what we have seen him achieve and attain? But this is only one among unnumbered instances of the like dispensations of Almighty God. It was not exclusively in the case of the apostles and primitive Christians, taken in general from the humblest classes of society, that "God chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and weak things of the world to confound the mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:" (1 Cor. i. 26—28 :) but it is surprising, and to the pious mind deeply and pleasingly affecting, in looking back through the histories of the church and of the world, to observe how much the principle of this remark holds good. Not only have the most unpromising characters become, in many instances, monuments of the saving mercy and grace of God; but the most unlikely instruments have generally been made the means of effecting the greatest purposes.

Not to ascend at all above our own age, or to depart from the particular class of individuals with whom the present memoirs immediately connect us, (though it would be easy to do both so as to interest and affect the pious reader,) I may ask, who would have anticipated, in looking to their early histories,

that Newton should have become so beloved and honoured a father in the church of Christ as thousands acknowledge him to be; or that Buchanan should have quitted his native Scotland in so singular a manner, to prove the most efficient leader in the great cause of Indian Christianization? No more could any one have supposed that an almost outcast Lincolnshire shepherd would become the commentator on scripture, whose work should possess decidedly the greatest practical utility, and bid fair to be the most widely read, of any similar production of the age.

Reflections like these may not, I am aware, be agreeable to all readers: but, if they be founded on undeniable facts, it neither becomes us to rebel against them, nor to avert our thoughts from them. The design of divine wisdom in such an ordination of events is pointed out, in immediate connexion with the passage already quoted at the commencement of the present observations: it is "that no flesh should glory in his presence . . . . . but, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor. i. 29, 31.)—And, even where this train of thought may lead us not only to cases of extraordinary usefulness, but even to the subject of the attainment of that knowledge wherein "standeth our eternal life," it will be found to border closely upon topics, which produced almost the only recorded instance of joy in the breast of him, who sojourned here below as "the man of sorrows:" "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes! Even so, Father, for so it seemed good



in thy sight." This is the perfect pattern of that humble, admiring adoration, with which those depths of the divine counsels are to be contemplated, which, in this world at least, we must never expect to fathom.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time instances, like those to which we have been adverting, furnish no excuse for the neglect of the ordinary means of becoming both good and useful; nor any pretence for the insinuation sometimes made, of our teaching that the way to be "brought nigh" to God is to depart as "far off" from him as possible. No: whatever forms the "ordinary" means of conducting to goodness and usefulness possesses, by virtue of that very character of the *ordinary* means, an undeniable claim to be employed by us; and, where faithfully employed, it shall never be in vain. This, however, shall not hinder but that God will from time to time show, that he can effect more without our usual means, than we can by all our means, without his special blessing:—just as in the intellectual world, he sometimes raises up a genius which shall surpass, without rules and instruction, whatever minds of the customary standard can attain with all advantages in their favour.

In like manner to affirm that *sometimes* God brings nearest to himself those who had wandered farthest from him, affords not even a plausible pretext for saying, that the way to obtain abundant grace is to commit abundant sin. God does sometimes exhibit such monuments of his mercy; but these are his extraordinary, and not his ordinary works. The abuse of such instances was guarded against in an early part of these memoirs. They are what all should admire,

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 450.

“to the praise of the glory of God’s grace,” wherever they occur, but on the occurrence of which no man can, in any given instance, calculate.

3. In the third place, my father’s history strikingly illustrates the immense advantage of such a *thorough study* of the Holy Scriptures, accompanied by constant prayer for illumination to the great fountain of wisdom, as marked his religious course from its very commencement. In this was evidently laid the foundation of all that subsequently distinguished him; of the steadiness and consistency of his views; of the assured confidence he felt in the principles which he had embraced; of his competence as an instructor and a counsellor; of those valuable qualities which characterized his theology; and finally of his extensive, and, it may confidently be anticipated, permanent usefulness. And, if the question be examined, it will, I believe, be found that a course of procedure, substantially similar, has prepared for future service almost all those divines who have obtained eminent reputation, and lasting usefulness, in the church of God. A thorough study of the scriptures themselves, with the use of proper helps, but without reliance upon them, and not of any mere human systems, should form the basis of our professional knowledge. This is a homage due to the word of God; and it is the only measure that can make us “grounded and settled,” “workmen that need not to be ashamed.” Yet how greatly is it wanting even among our more serious and pious clergy! I speak with a painful sense of my own deficiencies, in this respect; though without affecting to think them greater than those of many around me. If the

perusal of my father's history might promote, among the younger members of the clerical profession, a deep study of the *whole* sacred volume, and, through life, a constant comparison of all they read and hear with its contents, I can conceive of no result which it would have given him greater pleasure to contemplate.

4. Lastly: I have already pointed it out, as an important lesson suggested by my father's history, to those who, amid the difficulties of this world, are striving to do good, especially in the work of the ministry, that a course, which is deeply painful and discouraging at the time, may, and, if well supported, assuredly will, prove highly useful in the event. That his usefulness was great, and is likely still to be so, I now assume. Yet that his course was, during the far greater part of its duration, painful and discouraging in no common degree, is well known to those who had the opportunity of taking a near view of it, and must be evident to all, who have duly estimated the neglect or opposition he encountered at Olney; the severer and more protracted conflicts at the Lock, maintained against prevailing evils, and under the pressure of most disheartening unpopularity; and the difficulties with which he had to struggle, more or less, for five and twenty years together, in giving his Commentary on the Bible to the world. Yet all has had such an issue, as may justly add confidence to the faith, and animation to the hope of every true soldier and servant of Jesus Christ. To encounter difficulties, to bear up against discouragement, and to persevere "without fainting," in our labours of zeal for God and love to mankind, "even hereunto are we called." In all this we are but followers of those, who

through faith and patience,—having done the will of God,—now inherit his promises.” Prophets and apostles have trod this path before us: and assuredly what we have to encounter, compared with what they overcame, is such as may more justly subject us, if we be “weary and faint in our minds,” to the reproof which was addressed to one of their number: “If thou hast run with the footmen and they have wearied thee, what wilt thou do if thou shalt contend with horses?”—Even the Son of God, is prophetically represented as tempted to say, while he sojourned amongst us, “I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for naught:” but he instantly subjoins, (thus setting us the perfect example of resignation, and trust in his heavenly Father,) “Nevertheless my work is with the Lord, and my judgment is with my God.” Let us then assuredly believe, that, in our labours for others, as well as in our care for our own personal salvation, “He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.” And in this confidence let us endeavour, after the example of the servant of God, whose unwearied exertions, continued to the end of a long life, we have been contemplating, to be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.” Amen!

## A BRIEF MEMOIR

OF MR. SCOTT'S ELDEST DAUGHTER, WHO DIED AT WESTON  
UNDERWOOD, IN MAY 1780;

ANNEXED BY HIM TO HIS NARRATIVE OF HIS OWN LIFE.

(See above p. 132—134.)

“ IN a former part of this narrative I just mentioned the death of my eldest daughter, aged four years and a half, and I shall here subjoin a few more particulars respecting her.—At the age of three years and a half she had a most extraordinary and distressing illness, so that for several weeks she could not be induced to take either medicine or nutriment of any kind, but what was poured down her throat almost by main force. I had little expectation of her recovery: but I was under a full and deep conviction that all the human race are born in sin, and are utterly incapable of happiness hereafter, without regeneration and renovation by the Holy Spirit. This, if actually wrought in childhood, I was satisfied would begin to show itself about the time when children become actual sinners by personal and wilful transgression: and I was fully assured that she had become an actual sinner. Seeing therefore no ground to believe that any gracious change had taken place in her, I was greatly distressed about her eternal state: and I repeatedly and most earnestly besought the Lord that he would not take her from me, without affording me some evidence of her repentance, and faith in his mercy through Jesus Christ.

“ To the surprise of all she recovered, and lived just another year. Half of this year was remarkable for nothing, except the proofs which she gave of a very good understanding, and the readiness with which she learned whatever was taught her. Indeed she almost taught herself to read; and was so much the astonishment of our neighbours, that they expressed a persuasion that she would not live long—which I treated with contempt. But about the middle of the year, on my return home one evening, my wife told me that her daughter had behaved very ill, and been so rebellious and obstinate, that she had been constrained to correct her. In consequence I took her between my knees, and began to talk to her. I told her she had often heard that

she was a sinner against God : that sin was breaking the commandments of God : that he had commanded her to honour and obey her father and mother ; but that she had disobeyed her mother, and thus sinned against God and made him angry at her—far more angry than her mother had been : that she had also often heard that she must have a new heart or disposition : that, if her heart or disposition were not wicked, she would not thus want a new one ; but that her obstinate rebellious conduct to her mother, with some other instances which I mentioned, showed that her heart was wicked : that she therefore wanted both forgiveness of sins and a new heart, without which she could not be happy in another world, after death. I went on to talk with her, in language suited to her age, concerning the love, and mercy, and grace, of Christ, in a manner which I cannot now particularly describe ; but my heart was much engaged, and *out of the abundance of my heart my mouth spoke* : and I concluded with pressing it upon her constantly to pray to Jesus Christ to forgive her sins ; to give her a new heart ; and not to let her die till he had indeed done so.

“ I have good ground to believe, that from that time to her death no day passed in which she did not, alone, more than once, and with apparent earnestness, pray to Jesus Christ to this effect ; adding petitions for her father, mother, and brothers, and for her nurse—to whom she was much attached. At times we overheard her in a little room to which she used to retire ; and on some occasions her prayers were accompanied with sobs and tears. Once she was guilty of an untruth ; and I reasoned and expostulated with her on the wickedness of lying. I almost seem now to hear her subsequent confessions in her retirement ; her cries for forgiveness ; her prayers for a new and better heart ; and that she might not die ‘ before her new heart came.’ She could scarcely proceed for weeping.—In short there was every thing in miniature, which I ever witnessed or read of in an adult penitent : and certainly there were *fruits meet for repentance* ; or nothing reprehensible afterwards occurred in her conduct.

Just at this time the Olney Hymns were published : and, without any one putting her upon it, she got many of them by heart ; and for some months the first voice which I heard in the morning was her’s, repeating these hymns, and those of Dr.

Watts: and frequently she would come to me to tell me what a beautiful hymn she had found, and then repeat it without book.

“ I might recite many of her sayings, which were very striking from one so young. The favourite servant, who has been mentioned, sometimes used the name of God or Lord in an improper manner, and the child would affectionately remonstrate with her, and say, ‘ Do not use such words, Kitty: you will certainly go to hell if you say such naughty words.’ She evidently understood the great outlines of the plan of salvation. ‘ Papa,’ she said, ‘ you preached to-day concerning the Lamb’s blood.’ I answered, ‘ What does that mean?’ She replied, ‘ The blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God which taketh away the burden of sin out of our hearts.’ The day preceding her death, she read to me a chapter of St. John, in which the Jews charged Jesus with breaking the sabbath. On this she paused and said, ‘ Papa, did Jesus Christ ever break the sabbath?’ I answered, ‘ No: but he did good on the sabbath-day, and his enemies called that breaking the sabbath.’ ‘ I thought so,’ she said: ‘ Jesus was always good; but we are all naughty till he makes us good. Peter was a good man: but Peter was naughty till Jesus Christ made him good.’

“ When any minister or pious friend came to see me, no play or amusement would draw her away from us when our conversation was on religious topics. She would stand fixed in attention, and evidently interested in what was said. She seldom spoke on these occasions; but she would sometimes ask me questions afterwards on what she had heard.

“ The day before she died the Rev. Mr. Powley of Dewsbury, in Yorkshire, (who had married Mrs. Unwin’s daughter,) had engaged to come to see me, and preach in the evening. After dinner I employed myself, as I frequently did, in sawing wood for fuel. She came and prattled with me, and several times by degrees got so near me, that I feared the large pieces of wood would fall on her. I sent her further off: yet still, intent on our talk, she crept near again, till at length a very large log, which could scarcely have failed to kill her, had it fallen upon her, rolled down, and only just missed her. While very thankful for her preservation, little did I think that a very few hours would deprive me of my darling child.

“ I had scarcely got into the house to prepare for my visitant, when she came to me and said, ‘ I am very sick : what must I do ? ’ I said, ‘ You must pray for patience. ’ She asked, ‘ What is patience ? ’ and before I could answer, she was so ill that she could only go into the next room to the servant, where the most violent symptoms followed. As I was engaged with my friend, and with the preaching, having ordered her some medicines, I did not see her for several hours : but when I did I was fully convinced that her sickness was fatal. Some further means were used, but wholly without effect ; and she expired at ten o’clock the next morning, while repeating the Lord’s prayer, the concluding words of which were the last she spoke.

“ Her disorder was an attack of scarlet fever, which Dr. Kerr stated to be of a very peculiar kind, and that the case was hopeless from the first. I had attended fifty or sixty persons in that disease, and all recovered except my own child.

“ She died on the Thursday morning, and on the next evening at my lecture at Ravenstone, where I had undertaken to preach through part of the book of Job, the text which came in course was Job i. 21, *The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord !* and on this I preached notwithstanding the death of my child. It would be in vain to attempt to describe either my anguish or my exultation on this trying, yet animating occasion. Sorrow and joy succeeded each other in the highest degree, and often in the most rapid manner, that I ever experienced : and sometimes they were pathetically, dolefully, yet sweetly intermingled. Prayer and thanksgiving seemed my main employment. I never obtained such a victory over the fear of death as by looking, for a long time together, on her corpse. Gradually sorrow abated, and joy prevailed ; and I often said, I would not exchange my dead child for any living child in the world of the same age. Some have told me that her religious turn was only the effect of her hearing so much on the subject, and had nothing so extraordinary in it : but I never could see any thing of the same kind in my other children at so early an age, nor till they were much older ; though they had at least the same advantages.”





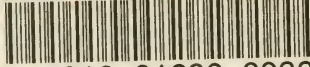








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